



2 NEWS/CHRONICLE

Karadzic forced into promise to step down

RADOVAN Karadzic... leader and an international figure... wanted for genocide...

becomes "president", and witnessed by Mr Milosevic... With details of the deal still unclear...



Radovan Karadzic, who agreed to resign as Bosnian Serb leader yesterday. It is feared he will continue to pull the strings

Insiders say that this week's talks lacked the usual mix of camaraderie and diplomacy...

US would push for renewed sanctions against Serbia if he did not comply... The fact that Mr Karadzic was able to march...

This latest, apparently efforted exercise of authority over Mr Karadzic was keenly noted in the Hague yesterday...

role in the Bosnian carnage. The spokesman for the Hague tribunal, Christian Hartz, described Mr Karadzic's climbdown as "the first step on a road which must lead to The Hague".

Blair grits his teeth to avert split over shadow election

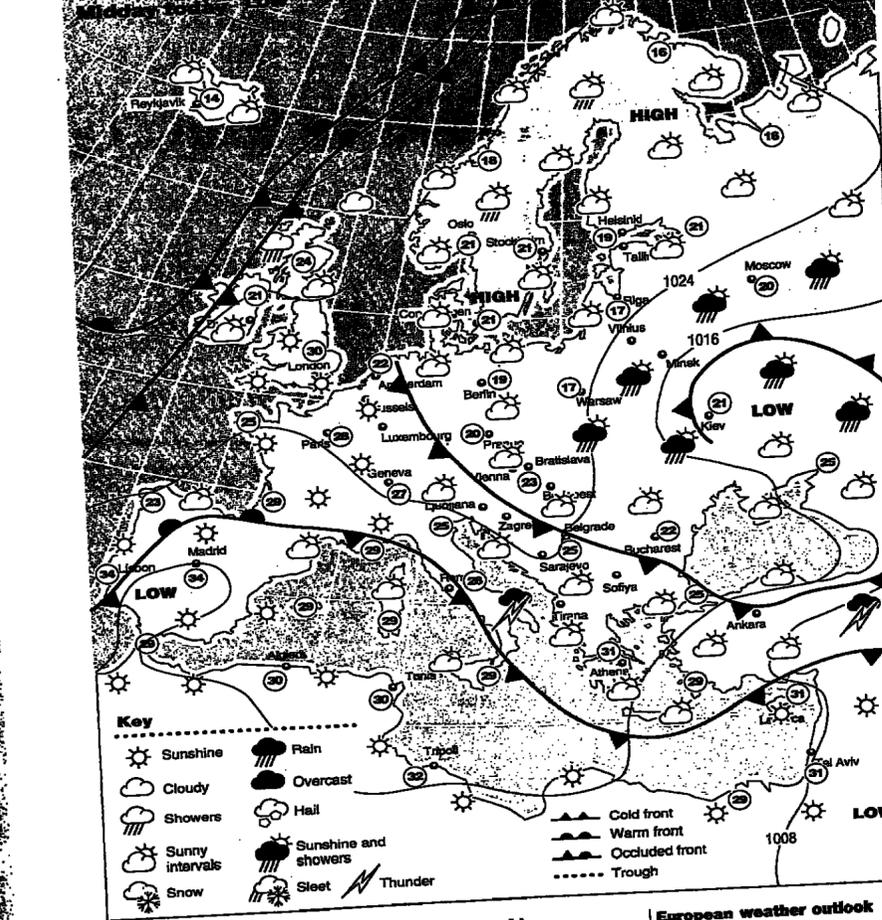
TONY BLAIR is giving his full support in Wednesday's shadow cabinet elections to people he privately loathes to ensure Labour goes into the general election with a united campaigning team...

that none of the more difficult rebels wins. Mr Blair has had to grit his teeth to support Clare Short, Ann Taylor, Michael Meacher and Harriet Harman...

Television and radio - Saturday

- BBC 1: 7.00am Enchanted Tales, 8.55am News, 9.00am Open's Britain Today, 9.30am The Cat, 10.00am Robbers, 10.30am Family...

The weather in Europe



Forecast for the cities: Table with columns for city, today's weather, and tomorrow's weather. Includes cities like Algiers, Amsterdam, Athens, Berlin, etc.

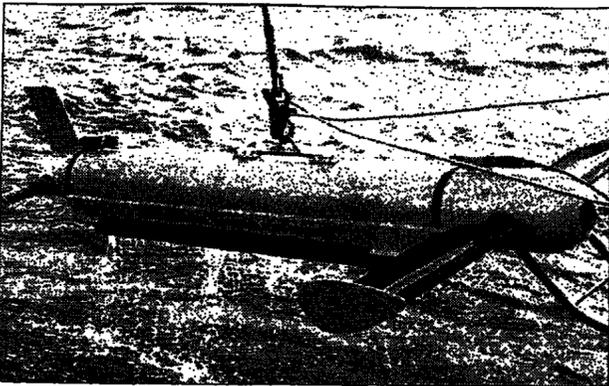
European weather outlook: A large area of high pressure covers much of Scandinavia and that means most places will be fine and bright with broken cloud and sunny periods...

Television and radio - Sunday

- BBC 1: 7.00am Enchanted Tales, 8.55am News, 9.00am Open's Britain Today, 9.30am The Cat, 10.00am Robbers, 10.30am Family...

Handwritten signature: Blair

July 20 1996



The US navy may use a sonar device similar to the one above to search the ocean floor for key flight data and voice recorders. Below, part of the plane's wing is lifted from the sea

# THE TWA DISASTER

## Missile suggestions played down as FBI begins inquiry and crash team scours the ocean bed

# Terrorist bomb theory gains ground

**Jim Kallstrom, the FBI agent in charge of New York's anti-terrorism task force, insisted he had not yet taken over the investigation, but said he had launched a "massive" investigation. "We will know what happened on that airplane, whether it is 24 hours from now or a week from now... If it is a terrorist attack we then have the challenge of finding the cowards who carried it out."**

Off Long Island, meanwhile, thick fog and choppy seas thwarted the search for bodies and debris from the aircraft which plunged into the sea less than half an hour into its flight from New York to Paris.

By lunchtime yesterday 140 bodies had been recovered. With hope of finding any survivors evaporated, investigators were concentrating their efforts on finding the two "black box" flight recorders, which it is hoped will help establish the cause of America's second worst air disaster. Hopes that the cause of the crash could be established

quickly were raised when it emerged that investigators using sonar equipment had found several large pieces of wreckage on the ocean floor. These were being recovered by Coastguard vessels.

Divers joined the flotilla of vessels and helicopters scouring a computer-generated grid but heavy seas prevented them from searching an area of the sea floor where a large section of the aircraft is believed to be lying.

The Clinton administration continued to discourage speculation about the cause of the crash, dismissing a threat of an imminent attack reportedly sent by a radical Islamic group to an Arabic newspaper.

Officials also discounted suggestions that Flight 800 may have been downed by a ground-to-air missile, pointing out that the aircraft exploded above the range of shoulder-fired missiles.

The missile theory had gained currency on Thursday night after it emerged that several witnesses reported seeing something bright head-

ing towards the aircraft and that radar operators had seen a second "blip" near the jet. Pentagon officials said the blip was a "spurious signal".

The army of crash investigators, law enforcement officers, scientists and medical staff continued to issue conflicting signals. Suffolk County Medical Examiner Charles Wetli said none of the bodies he had examined showed evidence of a bomb blast.

But Mr Kallstrom hinted it was only a matter of time before the investigation became a criminal inquiry. "There will be a point of time that we will reach critical mass and it won't be too long."

The FBI has appealed for anyone with information about the crash to get in touch and agents have begun interviewing everyone who saw Flight 800 go down. The bureau's forensic experts have begun examining wreckage.

**Trust put to flight, Outlook frost**

**The victims**

**'You just think you heard this and it didn't really happen'**

THEY were as diverse as the city they left 29 minutes earlier: a fashionable interior decorator and intimate of Andy Warhol; a TV producer on his last assignment; an elderly couple planning to celebrate a birthday in Paris; a pair of wine enthusiasts realising their dream of visiting the French vineyards, writes Ian Katz.

All that bound them together was that at 8.47pm on Wednesday evening they sat on the same TWA 747 bound for Paris and a few moments later they were dead. As the names became people yesterday, the full horror of

the Flight 800 tragedy set in. In Mendham, New Jersey, the Capozza family reminisced through tearful eyes about Ludovic Chanson's visit. The 11-year-old French exchange student had just spent his second summer with the family, indulging his twin passions for pistachio ice cream and televised basketball.

His bag had been so full of NBA basketball memorabilia that he had to sit on it to close it. On the way to the airport the Capozzas had taken him to Planet Hollywood for one last treat. He was wearing his beloved Chicago Bulls shirt when they waved goodbye to him at JFK.

In Scarsdale, New York, they remembered Lois Epps, an English and drama teacher at Edgemont High School. Ms Epps had no family of her own but was reportedly revered by her students. She was, said the school's principal, "a teacher about whom I have never heard a bad word. She had an uncanny ability to teach kids."

In the tiny Alabama town of Stevenson, population 2,300, they lowered all flags to half mast. Five local people were aboard Flight 800, headed for a holiday in France.

Michael Scott, a physicist, was taking his 13-year-old son, Joseph, and his friend, Thomas Weatherly, hiking in the French mountains. Mr Scott's wife Barbara, a nurse, planned a week's shopping in Paris with Thomas's mother, Brenda Privette.

Barry Privette, Mrs Privette's husband of eight months, stayed behind to work. "We just haven't got hold of it yet," said his brother, Don Privette. "We're just trying to cope with it."

At the Ramada Inn near JFK airport, relatives and friends of the lost replayed last conversations. Heidi Snow thought about the phone call in which her boyfriend had proposed to her, moments before taking his seat. They had spent a wonderful week together. "I guess that was the honeymoon we never had," said Ms Snow.

Joe Lycher remembered his wife's excitement as she called to say she was about to board the plane with their two daughters, aged 10 and 8. He told her to have fun and she promised she would.

"How many times do you get up in the morning and turn on the TV and think 'too bad' and then get in the car and go to work and then all of a sudden the phone rings and it's for you," said Mr Lycher's sister Judith Lycher.

Jacki Penzer thought about her seven-year-old daughter's last conversation with her sister, Judy. The child wanted to know why French fries were called French fries. She had broken news of the crash to her daughter gently but the child had guessed instantly. "She said 'Judy was on that plane. She's dead, isn't she?'"

The awful reality had not yet sunk in, said Ms Penzer. "At some moments you get so hysterical about it and at other moments you don't know what happened. You just think you heard this and it didn't really happen."

A vessel tows a piece of wreckage from the Boeing 747, which plunged into the sea off eastern Long Island, killing 230 people. PHOTOGRAPH: DANIEL GOODRICH

# Judge attacks growth hormone negligence as families win key case

**Clare Dwyer**  
Legal Correspondent

**L**ETHARGY and inaction by the Department of Health and the Medical Research Council caused the deaths of young people who were treated with growth hormone infected with the deadly Creutzfeldt-Jacob virus, High Court judge ruled yesterday.

Mr Justice Morland held that officials were negligent in not halting human growth hormone (HGH) treatment for short stature after they were alerted to fears about con-

tamination with the slow-acting virus.

He was delivering judgment in the first legal action over a pharmaceutical product to succeed in the English courts.

The group compensation claim was brought by the families of 11 young people who died from the human form of mad cow disease after taking growth hormone as children to boost their stature.

But families in court reacted with dismay as it became clear that only those few who started the treatment after July 1, 1977, will be eligible for compensation. It was

only after that date, the judge ruled, that growing information about the risk that CJD could be transmitted through the treatment pointed to a "clear duty" to halt the treatment programme.

Solicitors for the families said it would probably be unclear until after the weekend, when dates could be checked, how many will qualify for compensation. Early indications are that only a handful started the programme — which ran from 1969 until 1985 — after July 1, 1977. Compensation, for those who qualify, still has to be assessed.

The only certain beneficia-

ries yesterday were Zara, aged 10, and Nicola, aged 8, daughters of Patrick Baldwin, who died in 1993 aged 30. He started treatment in October 1977 and finished in 1980.

Tam Fry of the Child Growth Foundation, the parents' pressure group, whose daughter was treated with HGH but has not developed CJD, said: "It is iniquitous the judgment should exclude families whose children have died from any kind of compensation. Any family of a child who has died should be treated equally."

Nearly 2,000 children were treated with the hormone,

which was extracted from the pituitary glands of corpses in mortuaries. Mortuary technicians were paid 10p or 20p per gland to collect as many as they could, often from elderly people who died of dementia.

The slow virus, or prion, which causes CJD can incubate for up to 30 years, scientists believe. So an unknown number could still develop the disease, although no deaths have been recorded among those treated after 1980, when manufacture was switched to the government laboratory at Porton Down in Wiltshire.

A second group of claim-

ants, who were treated with HGH but have not developed CJD, are suing for the psychological trauma and other problems of living with an uncertain future.

Mr Justice Morland outlined a damning catalogue of inaction on the part of the department and the Medical Research Council. Officials displayed a "lack of drive and urgency" and acted "lethargically" in the face of mounting fears that HGH could be infected with the CJD virus.

A committee of specialists representing clinicians who were treating the children was "kept deliberately in the

dark" about the concerns, said the judge.

A warning by an eminent virologist, Professor Peter Wilby, in 1977 that any clinician who uses growth hormone must be made aware of the gruesome possibilities and their imponderable probabilities" was not passed on to the health service committee of clinicians overseeing the treatment programme.

In October 1976 the Medical Research Council was alerted by Dr Alan Dickinson, a veterinary scientist studying the sheep disease scrapie, which resembles CJD, of the possibility CJD could be trans-

mitted through growth hormone. Action on his written opinion, received five months later, was inadequate and lacked urgency, said the judge.

A member of the clinicians' committee at the time, Professor Charles Brook, professor of paediatric endocrinology at University College, told the judge during the hearing that he had never seen Professor Wilby's letter.

If he had seen it at the time, it would have had a "shattering" impact on him. Parents would have been told and the committee would have wanted to call a conference of experts to assess the risk.

# WEILL'S TROUBLED WATERS.

THE SILVER LAKE. KURT WEILL'S TURBULENT, JAZZ-INFLUENCED OPERA PERFORMED BY AN INTERNATIONAL CAST. JULY 21 AT 7:30PM. EVERY NIGHT OF THE PROMS IS LIVE ON RADIO 3.

THE PROMS

Lilley invites businesses to tender for taking over payment of child benefit, as unions warn that thousands of jobs could be at risk

# Social security 'faces privatisation'

Simon Midgley

**G**OVERNMENT proposals to privatise the payment of child benefit and possibly other elements of welfare could anger the wholesale privatisation of the social security system and the loss of thousands of jobs, civil service unions warned yesterday.

One union leader warned that industrial action, which might involve withholding child benefit payments from millions, could be imminent.

Yesterday Peter Lilley, Secretary of State for Social Security, announced that the private sector was being invited to submit proposals for taking over payment of child benefit to 7 million families.

In a related initiative, private companies are being invited to work with the Benefits Agency in administering benefit delivery in three of the agency's 13 regions — in Yorkshire, the West Country, and East London and Anglia — for 12 months.

The companies are to help develop new business processes and information technology, but will also be invited to submit proposals spelling out how parts of the agency's business could be run more efficiently in future including possible further privatisation.

The first proposal involves a multinational computer company or bank, for example, taking over the role of the Child Benefit Centre in Washington, Tyne and Wear in administering child benefit, one-parent benefits and guardian's allowances. The centre's 1,850 staff would cease to be government employees and would move to

the payroll of the private contractor.

Yesterday Mike King, national officer of the Public Services, Tax and Commerce Union, warned that the proposals augured "the wholesale privatisation of welfare benefit" and the loss of "thousands of civil servants' jobs" — a view shared by Chris Kirk, section secretary of the Civil and Public Services Association.

Announcing the changes in a parliamentary written reply yesterday, Mr Lilley said the initiatives were "designed to improve the administration

of the benefit system" but would not change any individual's entitlement to benefits.

The proposal to privatise the delivery of child benefit was leaked to the Guardian earlier this week and has been condemned by the Labour and Liberal Democrat parties, which fear contracting out will reduce efficiency, put confidentiality at risk and threaten job losses.

The twin proposals will go some way towards helping the Government reduce the £3 billion cost of administering the benefits system by 25 per cent in three years. They will also help it in its bid to reduce the Department of Social Security's staff of 68,000 civil servants by more than 20,000. Most will move to the private sector, while others would be made redundant.

Mr King said yesterday that thousands of jobs could be lost and some, or indeed all, benefits could be administered by the private sector in future. His union and the CPSSA would be consulting their members about what action to take. Industrial action could not be ruled out, and this might well include

refusing to pay child benefit to the nation's mothers.

"The Government is inviting private companies to cherry-pick bits of the agency," Mr King said.

Mr Lilley said yesterday: "People will continue to get their child benefit, hopefully more efficiently and at less cost to the taxpayer."

"I want to focus that on people in genuine need and avoid cutting benefits. Over £3 billion is spent just on administering benefits."

He added that although many staff at the Child Benefit Centre would continue to

be employed after contracting out, there would, undoubtedly, be fewer jobs in the DSS in the years to come.

Last November Mr Lilley said, in a private letter to William Waldegrave, Chief Secretary to the Treasury, that proposed Treasury cuts in the costs of running the Department of Social Security filled him with despair and would have a devastating impact.

Chris Smith, Labour social security spokesman, said that if possible a future Labour government would halt the involvement of the private sector in benefit payments.



## Burning flesh as the Phoenix rises

Nick Varley

**O**N STAGE the lead singer of Dodgy is singing "Staying out for the summer. Playing games in the rain." Below him thousands at the front are wishing they were.

The only moisture falling on them is from hoses, courtesy of the fire brigade, and enough of their own sweat at 4pm on a sweltering day to form a cloud of steam.

The results? The busiest people at this year's Phoenix Festival, co-sponsored by the Guardian, aren't the bands, the stallholders or security but the first-aiders.

Almost 300 medics had treated 800 people by the end of yesterday's first full day — more than in the whole of last year's week



Liking it hot... Fans at this year's Phoenix Festival, where the bill included Alanis Morissette (top left), feel the sun yesterday. MAIN PHOTOGRAPH: SEAN SMITH

and. Even among those who don't require first aid, there is more red skin than on a Mediterranean beach the morning the first holidaymakers arrive.

The chief medic, Shawn O'Malley, said last night: "Thirty minutes out in it and they've got no chance. We've seen more cases today than in the whole of last year and it's still just the first day. I'm sure we'll be seeing even more tomorrow and on Sunday."

Despite the smell of slowly cooking suntan oil-covered flesh mingling with the burger and noodle stalls, there was no sign that the 35,000 at the Phoenix, at Long Marston, near Stratford-upon-Avon, were prepared to slumber down.

Eloise, who headlines today, this week described Britpop as "something very boring I don't rally like. Like bread or potatoes: no taste but it fills you up. Dance music on the other

hand is cherries and tequila — the extremes. Chocolate mousse with 9,000 billion calories and a steak with it."

Yesterday the menu included everything from the low-cal Alanis Morissette to the chaotic noiseman cuisine of the Prodigy. For the picky who didn't fancy any of the live music there was a comedy stage, a dance tent, and even a celebrity five-a-side football tournament.

## Bus driver to be questioned on school crash

Hannah Pool

**T**HE driver of the bus which plunged into a bridge and injured 51 children and one adult will be interviewed by police today after it emerged that he ignored road signs banning double-decker buses.

An investigation into the accident by Cheshire county council officials found that the bus, which was carrying children from Palace Fields primary school, Runcorn, did not have a permit to be on the road.

Three children and the adult were still in hospital last night. Injuries on the bus would have been worse were it not for the quick thinking of Ryan McGibbon, aged 10.

Ryan, who was sitting at the front of the top deck of the bus, shouted at his friends when he saw the bridge approaching. The youngsters, who escaped with minor cuts and bruises, said: "I saw the bridge coming and I just shouted to everyone to duck. The roof just caved in on everybody."

He added: "Everyone shouted at the driver that it was the wrong way but he said it was a short cut."

The bus was travelling along a route restricted for the past 20 years to single-decker buses. Peter Cocker,

council engineer, said: "We have very strict, very clear and very well known rules about who can and who can't use Runcorn Busway."

"Only registered bus services are able to use the busway. To register, an operator must be providing a regular bus service with single-decker buses. One-off operators, tour companies and occasional users cannot register and are therefore banned from the route."

Yesterday, the headteacher at Palace Fields, Joe Moyston, said it was common knowledge that double deckers are banned from that route.

Dobson's bus company was on a recommendation list given to schools. Mr Moyston said: "Cheshire education authority have used Dobson's for some time, in fact since the eighties, and they are an established company. Anyone would expect contracted drivers to know the way, but we can't comment on the cause of the accident as we must wait for the results from the police investigation."

A spokesman for Dobson's Buses, of Cheshire, said: "We extend our heartfelt sympathy to all those injured and to their families."

"The company will co-operate fully with the official inquiry into the circumstances leading up to this terribly sad incident."

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# 'We will continue to tell the truth to the nations'

Sam Younger, managing director of the World Service, says the changes at the BBC pose no threat to its role as a trusted source of information in closed societies

**"T**HIS is to inform you that the news about the reform of the BBC World Service touches our people here with cold hands," writes Burmese students. They describe vividly how the BBC can be heard everywhere in Burma.

"The military regime has shut our eyes, as a country in the dark. People listen to the BBC every morning and night. Please keep the BBC World Service, don't split it, please let Burmese people rely on BBC."

Whenever the future of the World Service becomes an issue there is intense interest among listeners and supporters worldwide. And although there is a growing audience in the UK, you have to travel overseas to appreciate fully how much good will it generates for this country.

By providing a trusted source of information in closed societies, the World Service is literally a lifeline. Even in the media-saturated United States, where

World Service programmes are now increasingly available on FM as well as short wave, there is a dedicated and growing audience.

Over the years, the main topic that has made the headlines has been funding — indeed, the Burmese service itself was nearly a victim of financial cutbacks in the early 1980s, but was revived. Today funding is still a central issue.

This year's cuts have only affected the money the World Service is allocated for capital investment. Next year, further reductions are planned by the Government, not just in the capital budget but also, more worryingly, in the budget for broadcasting operations. We are committed to a prospective shortfall of £5 million. The closure of some language services will be the only solution if the planning figures are not changed.

Today's concern, however, is not just about funding. It also centres on the very structure of the World Service and how it fits into the BBC as a whole as the corporation pre-

pare itself for the digital age. Should the World Service be exempt from the restructuring of the BBC — should it stand alone and beat its own path into the 21st century?

And should our listeners be so concerned? That they are concerned is a measure of the esteem in which the service is held. Much has been written about the need to preserve the ethos of the World Service; in particular, the need to protect the relationships within Bush House between the newsroom and their colleagues in more than 40 language services — like a "United Nations that actually works," as one distinguished former colleague described it.

When the restructuring was announced last month, the answer was not immediately clear. Much detail had to be worked out to establish arrangements that would work effectively for our listeners. More work has to be done, but some of the most important aspects have already been agreed and I believe they can work.

The World Service will remain a specific entity in its own right, responsible for the key relationship with the Foreign Office, and will have full managerial and editorial control of all programme commissioning. News and daily programmes will be commissioned by the current editor

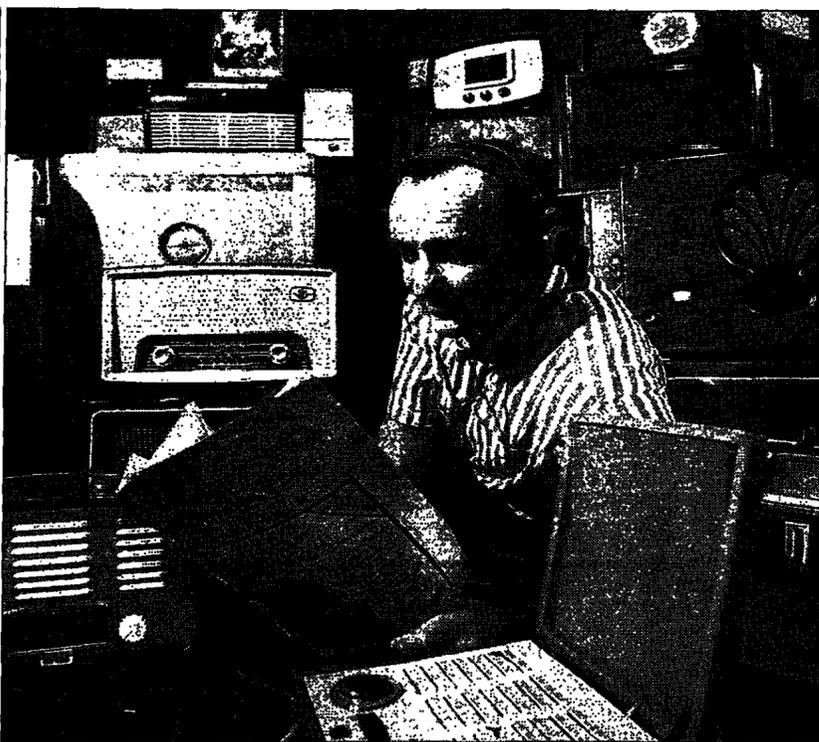
from a team that will remain a distinct unit dedicated to World Service output.

The World Service will be involved in key editorial appointments, and in staff training and development. Similar arrangements for non-daily news programmes and the rest of our English programmes — music, drama, sport and much more — are currently being worked out, as are the details of how technical resources will be provided.

But as with news, the arrangements will have to guarantee the distinctive nature of our programming and the supply of information to non-English services, whose programmes will continue to be produced as well as commissioned by the World Service itself.

Over the long term, I believe the changes could help us to improve programme quality and reduce costs. For BBC audiences overseas as well as here at home, there is much to be said for ensuring the BBC as a whole has the world's most comprehensive and professional newsgathering operation.

So long as governments sustain their commitment to proper funding for the World Service, listeners around the world can be quite sure that it will still be there to rely on. Their eyes will remain open.



Stephen Denham of Wakefield Museum with part of Britain's biggest collection of radios, now on show at the museum. Mr. Denham said: "These fine examples of craftsmanship seem to speak to people in the same way as the excellence and accuracy of the World Service. It would be an enormous shame if chunks were chopped out of the service. Once a reputation like the World Service's has been lost, it is almost impossible to reclaim"

PHOTOGRAPH: DON MCFEE

## My World Service



### Peter Temple-Morris MP

**I**N 1964 I married my Persian bride and adopted a second country and culture. Out to Tehran with our children we would go and in the cool of the garden, under the trees, lunch would be served.

At precisely 2pm each day a short-wave radio would be brought to the table and everyone would go silent to listen to the BBC World Service news.

For the first time in my life I realised the importance of the service, its quality and its truth to foreign audiences and countries, national leaders, Beirut hostages, Mr Gorbachev in his August 1981 Crimea confinement and all the many others.

Ever since I have tried to promote and defend the service. It has not always been easy. Lady Thatcher, when Prime Minister, did not always have an easy relationship with the BBC. When one adds to this attitudes towards the Foreign Office and public service broadcasting one is in a sense grateful that it has all survived.

That said, the World Service had to struggle and was repeatedly under one assault or another.

A typical case in point was the long campaign necessary to bring World Service Television News into being. A quicker and more constructive response from Government would have got it off the ground before CNN became as well established as it did in the mid-1980s.

But I must emphasise the constructive side. The World Service is stronger, more audible and more listened to than ever. It is appreciated and encouraged by the Foreign Office and by Government and Opposition.

At the beginning of this Parliament no fewer than 425 members signed a motion to protect the World Service budget. A further motion currently put before the House on the proposed BBC changes and World Service funding stands with little effort at some 240 signatures and rising. All this is because we see

the World Service as something very special — a jewel in the BBC's crown and indeed a major national asset.

There is something odd about such a plus factor for Britain being under threat of financial cutbacks, let alone faced with major structural reorganisation.

The BBC stands responsible for the World Service. The Government must make proper financial provision for it and watch over its well-being.

### Your views

E-mail your views or experiences of the World Service from anywhere in the world to [savewsh@guardian.co.uk](mailto:savewsh@guardian.co.uk) (BBC employees welcome).

Readers with access to the Internet can browse through Guardian articles and feedback from other readers on our special Internet site, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/savewsh/>

## Labour pledges to review plan

Martin Kettle

**L**ABOUR increased the pressure on the BBC to reconsider its proposed World Service changes last night by promising to conduct a review in its first year in office.

Speaking in London, Robin Cook, the shadow foreign secretary, called on BBC director-general John Birt to postpone any changes to the service until there had been proper consultations. Mr Birt has so far refused to suspend his plans, which have been opposed by more than 230 MPs.

Mr Cook said Labour believed it was vital that the World Service's distinctive quality and style should be preserved. "That is why I am announcing today that within the first year of a new Labour



would be irresponsible to allow radical restructuring of the kind proposed by Mr Birt without first being clear it would not harm the World Service and would strengthen it for the future.

He added: "I am deeply concerned at the lack of consultation before these proposals were announced. I have, therefore, written to John Birt asking him to postpone making any changes to the organisation of the World Service until there have been proper consultations."

Mr Cook's letter asked the BBC to demonstrate that its proposals would meet four minimum conditions. First, that the World Service's commissioning powers should include the ability to select personnel and production teams and to set quality and production standards and values. Second, while welcoming

the announcement that the World Service will retain its own newsroom, Mr Cook insisted that it should come directly under World Service management control and not be subsumed into BBC News.

Mr Cook's third condition is that the changes should not result in the World Service having to buy programmes at a higher cost from the BBC. Fourthly, Mr Cook urged that the management of the World Service needed to be represented at the very highest level in the BBC, and that the managing director of the World Service should be included on the BBC's proposed executive committee.

Mr Cook's intervention comes only days before Mr Birt and Sir Christopher Bland, the new BBC chairman, are due to meet Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind to explain their plans.

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# 6 WORLD NEWS

## Pressure grows for electoral reform and job targets

# Bonn angers Major with plans for EU

John Palmer in Brussels

GERMAN government proposals put before the Maastricht Treaty review conference would introduce proportional representation (PR) in Britain for the next elections to the European Parliament.

In a separate move also likely to anger John Major's government, the new Irish presidency of the EU is circulating a draft treaty amendment which would oblige governments to give higher priority in future to full employment policies.

British ministers have said they will oppose any move to establish a common electoral system for the European Parliament throughout the EU. They have also signalled opposition to EU mandatory goals on jobs, which might call into question existing commitments to low inflation and monetary stability.

Alone among the 15 EU countries, Britain still operates a "first past the post" system for European elections. The German government has demanded that the European Union treaty be negotiated to require all member states either to implement a fully PR system or to guarantee that at least a third of

seats will be allocated on a proportional basis.

There is growing irritation that Britain's first-past-the-post system is distorting the balance of political power in Strasbourg. Over the past 10 years, British Conservatives and Labour have at different times been greatly over-represented.

"The absence of uniformity is one of the main obstacles to the emergence of a public which thinks of itself as European," said Werner Hoyer, Germany's special representative of the Maastricht Treaty review conference. "Indeed it casts doubts on the democratic legitimacy of the European Parliament."

EU governments are also aware that Labour seems ready to introduce PR for elections in Northern Ireland, Scotland and probably in Wales, and has not ruled it out for Europe. Indeed, Tony Blair is being pressed by some of his MEPs to accept PR for Strasbourg if only to insure against a mid-term, anti-government swing in 1999 if Labour wins the next general election. They fear that Labour could lose many of its 68-strong Strasbourg delegation — by far the largest national grouping in the 572-seat assembly.

According to the Irish presidency's draft treaty text on

employment, a special EU committee would be established to check national governments' progress towards meeting targets on jobs. A comparison is bound to be made with the powerful EU monetary committee, which examines the success of member states in meeting the Maastricht treaty criteria for joining a single currency in 1999, although the employment committee would only have an advisory role.

The idea of a special employment chapter in the treaty came from the Swedish government. But it has now been formally adopted by the Irish presidency, which believes it will be supported by what a senior Irish official described yesterday as "a clear majority" of governments. The draft text states that EU governments will accept "their employment policies (will) be a question of common interest".

Meanwhile, pressure is growing on EU governments to take more radical measures to reduce unemployment as part of the strategy for a single currency after 1999. EU social affairs ministers meeting in Dublin last week heard that Europe could be heading for a "jobless recovery" which would do little to reduce the nearly 20 million people looking for work.

# Kohl's spending cuts rejected by upper house

Denis Staunton in Berlin

GERMANY'S upper house of parliament, the Bundesrat, yesterday rejected a package of public spending cuts aimed at enabling Germany to qualify for membership of a single European currency in 1999.

The Bundesrat, where the opposition Social Democrats have a majority, voted to refer the 210 billion package to a mediation committee for review next month. But Chancellor Helmut Kohl has warned that he will resist any changes to the package and push it through the Bundesrat in September.

The Social Democrat leader, Oskar Lafontaine, condemned the proposed cuts as misconceived, saying they would hit the poor hardest but fail to reduce public debt. "The federal government's package of cuts will increase unemployment and public debt. It threatens our country's social harmony and economic stability. That is why it is our duty to correct this package," he said.

The Social Democrats acknowledge the need for spending cuts but the labour minister, Norbert Blum, accused



Oskar Lafontaine: Says the cuts are misconceived

it does not exist," he said. The most controversial elements in the package include a public service pay freeze, a 20 per cent cut in sick pay and the removal of employment protection for workers in small firms. Around 300,000 trade unionists took part in a demonstration against the cuts in Bonn last month.

Federal states governed by Dr Kohl's Christian Democrats voted in favour of the government yesterday but some called for changes to the package, reflecting backbenchers' unease about the extent of the measures.

Bavaria's conservative prime minister, Edmund Stoiber, called for pregnant women to be exempted from the reduction in sick pay. But he accused the Social Democrats of making revisions harder by adopting a policy of blinkered obstruction. "Nothing moves any further because you want to drag everything out to the very end, even if there are some things you cannot change or prevent," he said.

"That means a mediation committee and a vote in the Bundesrat. Whenever your votes are needed you'll vote against it so it will just be left hanging somewhere."



A Russian soldier uses an ammunition box to get a better view of the area around his camp near the Chechen town of Shadi. Heavy fighting against separatist guerrillas continues in the south of the region

PHOTOGRAPH: GLEB GARANICH

# Kremlin relieves far east blackout

David Hearst in Moscow

EMERGENCY fuel supplies were rushed to Russia's far east yesterday after power cuts blacked out an entire region, trapping miners underground, crippling the city of Vladivostok, and virtually shutting down the air traffic control system.

The main power plant in Primorski Krai shut down for the first time since 1937, and officials reported that the others would run out of fuel today.

The crisis arose after the federal government suddenly stopped paying fuel subsidies — traditionally the highest in Russia — to the region. Within days the regional power supplier, Dalenergo, ran out of money for fuel oil.

It may be the first sign of a payments crisis that could affect other Russian regions as well. The state's unpaid wages and other debts are rapidly approaching 30 trillion roubles (£3.9 billion).

The effects of the power cuts have been dramatic. On Thursday 100 miners at Gri-chanka mine were trapped underground without ventilation for an hour. Large areas of the region were without water as the pumps were shut down, and at one point Vladivostok's huge fishing port feared a release of ammonia gas into the atmosphere when the compressors cooling the giant refrigeration plants were in danger of exploding.

In Vladivostok, which has been without power for 15 hours a day, there were reports of bands of irate people sabotaging the power supplies of those districts that still had their lights on. There was fear for the safety of the Pacific Fleet's nuclear submarine base.

The governor of Primorski Krai, Yevgeny Nazdrachenko, flew to Moscow to bang some sense into senior government officials. He told a Vladivostok newspaper that he found total chaos.

"No questions can be resolved here. Some of the government ministers are still celebrating [Yeltsin's] victory, others are on holiday, and the rest are sitting on their suitcases waiting to be sacked."

# Tough choices faced on gas emissions

The argument on global warming is won, but now the hard work of convincing voters begins, writes Paul Brown in Geneva

DELEGATES returned home last night from the conference on world climate knowing that their countries must cut carbon dioxide emissions by half in the next half century to mitigate the worst effects of global warming.

Tough political decisions must be made in industrial countries now committed to adopting legally binding limits and achieving significant overall reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

Each country must examine policy on energy, transport, industry, agriculture, forestry and waste management, including the implementation of new taxes to cut greenhouse gas emissions.

In the United Kingdom, where moving away from coal in favour of gas has achieved existing targets for pegging carbon dioxide emissions at 1990 levels by 2000, new measures will be needed beyond the turn of the century.

The Government has already instituted landfill taxes in a bid to cut methane emissions from rubbish dumps, and is increasing duty on petrol by 5 per cent a year above inflation in an effort to cut consumption. The Cabinet will have to consider new measures before officials meet again in Geneva in December when negotiations begin on target levels.

The UK currently supports reductions of five to 10 per

cent by 2010 but the Alliance of Small Island States (Aosis) is demanding 20 per cent by 2005, which seems impossible to deliver. A final agreement is expected to be negotiated at the next ministerial session in Kyoto, Japan, in December 1997.

For countries like the United States and Japan, both of which are set to exceed their existing stabilisation targets, the political decisions promise to be harder than for Britain. However, both are convinced by the scientific evidence that action is required.

The European Union was instrumental in drawing attention to the limits beyond which the world should not

be allowed to heat up. A doubling of carbon dioxide levels since the Industrial Revolution is expected to cause a rise of 2C. But this effect would be uneven and some areas could warm by up to 7C.

Professor Bert Bolin, the chairman of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, said that man's activities had caused levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere to rise to 360 parts per million from 280 ppm in pre-industrial times.

By 2060, if there was no reduction in emissions, levels would have reached 560 ppm, enough to raise the temperature by 2C. In fact, if the other greenhouse gases such as methane were taken into account, the equivalent of a doubling of the carbon dioxide levels could have occurred by 2030.

Clearly something must be done urgently if "critical" levels of greenhouse gases were not to be reached, he said.

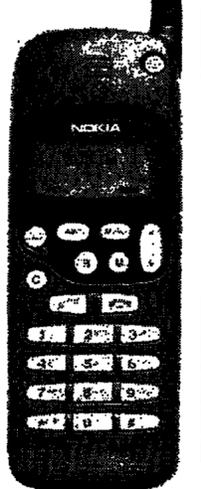
In the original Climate Change Convention signed in 1992 at the Earth Summit, which the politicians were in Geneva to discuss, governments were asked simply not to allow greenhouse gases in the atmosphere to reach "dangerous" levels.

So far the politicians have not defined what is meant by dangerous and Professor Bolin also refused to define it. However, he did say: "If a 2C increase is critical, then you could say it would be dangerous to exceed it."

Professor Martin Parry, from University College, London, said that a critical level of climate change was one to which natural systems could not adapt.

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# Hungary hard on Gypsies

Nick Thorpe in Budapest

DESPITE attempts to improve rights for the Gypsy population of Hungary, a Human Rights Watch report this week highlights police mistreatment of the minority and claims they face inbuilt discrimination in the country's education system.

According to the report by the New York-based organisation, "endemic discrimination against Roma appears to be growing, even as Hungary is transforming itself".

The cases in the 150-page report include allegations of violence committed against Gypsies — followed either by police apathy or police violence towards the victims. Among the report's recommendations are that police be re-trained, that all police interrogations be recorded, and that police suspected of being prosecuted for violence be prosecuted.

The biggest social conflict is between the Roma as a whole, and the police as a whole. Aladar Horvath, director of the foundation for Roma civil rights in Budapest, said, "As well as their everyday prejudices... individual police have much too much power, and they abuse it."

Otto Heinek, the deputy president of the office for ethnic minorities, points out that elected Roma councils have been operating for 18 months, adding: "Legally speaking, much has already been achieved."

But everyday discrimination is harder to counter. A quarter of Hungary's estimated half million Gypsies live in the capital, with the rest scattered in ghettos on the edge of towns and villages. Their non-Gypsy neighbours claim that they burn their stairs for firewood, and routinely steal.

Human Rights Watch found most evidence of discrimination in education. Researchers found many children were automatically put into the remedial class "on sight" — because of the darkness of their skin, regardless of their educational ability.

The "Gandhi" secondary school for Gypsies was established two years ago in the southern town of Peecs, but some have asked whether such schools mean the Roma are giving up hope of getting equal opportunities in ordinary schools. "Roma schools are a form of self-segregation," Aladar Horvath said, "but at least they give Roma parents a choice of where to send their children."

# Moro's killer jailed three days after life sentence

Reuter in Rome

THE MAN convicted of carrying out one of Italy's most shocking crimes — the 1978 kidnap and murder of the former prime minister Aldo Moro — was arrested yesterday, three days after he was sentenced to life imprisonment.

Germano Maccari was found guilty on Tuesday of being one of two killers who shot the Christian Democrat leader after he had been held for 55 days in a Rome apartment.

Maccari, who was arrested at his home in the capital, was not jailed after the sentence because, under Italian law, convicted criminals are often allowed to remain free until they have exhausted the appeals process.

But a Rome court ruled yesterday in favour of a request by the prosecution to detain him in case he fled before an appeal.

"This had to be done after a sentencing for such grave crimes," Rome's public prosecutor Antonio Marini said. Moro's murder is generally regarded as marking the height of the leftwing Red Brigades' campaign of violence in the 1970s.

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Salvadoreans are discovering the truth about what happened to hundreds of children lost during the civil war, writes Steve Fainaru

# El Salvador seeks its lost generation

**E**LSY Dubón Romero lost everything but her name one afternoon in 1982. As her mother cowered behind a thorn bush, and her father lay dead, a soldier grabbed the 7-year-old girl and loaded her on to a helicopter, which rose and disappeared into the blank sky.

Thus began her new life. From an army base, to a Red Cross shelter, she was shuttled finally to an orphanage near San Salvador where she grew up, ordered never to talk about what had happened, and told her family was dead.

It was not until 12 years later, when she was married and pregnant — did she learn that her mother, Francisca, was alive, along with five brothers and sisters.

"It all came back to me when I saw their faces," she said, quietly sobbing.

Four years after the end of El Salvador's civil war, the country is discovering the truth about what happened to hundreds of its lost children: they were seized from villages by the American-backed military and falsely written off as war orphans, even as relatives spent years searching for them or clinging to hope that they were safe.

Many were abducted by soldiers as part of a wider practice of removing children from battlefields, sometimes from their mothers' arms. The practice — unreported during the war — was known to at least one United States military adviser, who now says he saw it as a humanitarian gesture.

Some children were doled out to wealthy Salvadorean families and military officers. Some were raised in military bases as mascots. Others were taken to so-called *casas de acogida*, literally "homes for fattening up", before poorly regulated foreign adoptions that cost as much as £13,000.

Last month, the drama reached the US. Through DNA testing by the Boston-based Physicians for Human Rights, investigators proved that the long-lost daughter of José and Victoria Lafnez, two peasants, was living in Youngstown, Ohio, her name changed from Imelda to Gina. But Imelda, there wasn't any. Gina was adopted by believing her parents had been killed.

The girl, now aged 17, was snatched from a bed when she was six during an attack in 1984 on a clandestine guerrilla hospital. She wound up at a state-run orphanage, later to be declared "morally and materially abandoned" by a Salvadorean judge during a 15-minute hearing with the Ohio couple. Despite her adoption, the girl had long maintained her parents were alive.

On Thursday Gina met her natural parents in a tearful reunion in Los Cocos, El Salvador. "I feel like I'm back home," she said. "All the faces look so familiar."

Until now, the children have been like missing footnotes from a cold war conflict that killed 75,000 Salvadoreans and about two dozen Americans, and cost the US government \$6 billion in its decade-long effort to help the Central American country's government stamp out a Marxist insurgency.

**T**HE issue has been buried under other human rights abuses linked to the Salvadorean military, including the assassination of Archbishop Oscar Romero, the murder of six Jesuit priests, and massacres.

Adolfo Blandón, a general, now retired, who was El Salvador's chief of staff from 1982 to 1984, acknowledged that children were taken from war zones, but said he was

unaware of the scale of the problem until recently. He admitted that he committed an error to not have complete control over these children," he said. "But I never felt that it was a very big problem. I believe it was an error of the military high command."

Gen Blandón, who said he never discussed the issue of displaced children in his strategy sessions with US advisers, now claims that the Salvadorean Red Cross, after failing to verify whether parents of children taken by the military were still alive, delivered them to wealthy local families, military officials, orphanages and even US military advisers.

"I know that various [US] advisers, especially couples that did not have children, took advantage of the opportunity to carry out these children."

US officials who served in El Salvador confirmed that military advisers, as well as US embassy staff, were among the Americans who adopted 2,354 Salvadorean children during the war. But they said the adoptions were legal.

"A country of 6 million people, the Association in Search of Disappeared Children is investigating 200 cases of children who vanished during the war. The group has located 29 of them, including three cases confirmed through DNA testing. It has traced 151 disappearances to the military."

"Some children ended up in the US, the groups believe, because of a booming child-trafficking business. According to people with experience in Salvadorean adoptions, the US embassy ignored widespread abuses, including what Gen Blandón alleged was the "complicity of everyone, from immigration officials to judges to unscrupulous lawyers".

As a result, well-meaning Americans adopted children whose backgrounds were never adequately checked.

Sharon Hamilton, an embassy nurse in 1982-83, recalled: "There was a war going on, and I guess we knew that they were orphans, that they were being stolen. But I mean, there wasn't any way to find their parents."

She said: "I really feel badly now that these kids were taken from their parents, but nobody thought they would be going to a bad place."

In fact, the welfare of the children today, a decade later, has left many wrestling with the legal and ethical issues of reuniting families with children who have grown up in separate worlds.

Rev Jon de Cortina, the co-founder of the Association in Search of Disappeared Children, said: "The only thing we want is for the lost children to know their identities, to know who they are and where they came from. And the family has a right to know how their child is."

But it remains unclear whether ties severed so bluntly can ever be mended.

In 1982, a six-month-old boy named Nelson Anivar Ramos was taken from his mother's arms and placed on a helicopter in Chalatenango province. Located by the Association two years ago in the same private orphanage where Ely was found, the 12-year-old boy's name had been changed to Juan Carlos Serrano. He wore jeans, listened to music, and dressed up as a superhero.

For the boy's mother, a peasant named María Magdalena Ramos who lives in a hamlet called San Antonio Los Ranchos, the reconciliation was a godsend. Asked how he felt, Juan Carlos said: "I felt nothing. I felt no love for her. It is difficult to think of her as my mother."

After days of fleeing with her mother and her six-month-old son Nelson, María Magdalena, then 16, was awakened one morning by the sounds of soldiers and gunfire. She tried to run but a soldier grabbed her by the arm and led her away.

"There were already about 200 people there, and they were taking away the children. Then they began to use their radios to call the

helicopters and they began to take away the kids."

"It was in the second [helicopter] they took my baby. My mother threw herself over him, and we begged them that if they had to kill us to please kill us all with the baby. They told us: 'No, the young ones don't have to suffer because of you.'"

"When it took off with my baby a soldier said to me: 'Don't cry... those children, they're going to serve the government.'"

The Association in Search of Disappeared Children has what it calls credible evidence of 86 cases of children taken from their families during the May massacre.

After initially denying that children were separated from their parents, Salvadorean military officials now acknowledge that some were evacuated, but only after being abandoned.

But others believe that the



Amilcar Guardado, aged 21, is reunited with his cousins in Las Vueltes, El Salvador. Soldiers killed his mother and brother beside the Sumpul River when he was five, and he grew up as the surrogate son of an army officer. Below: The Ohio teenager Gina, baptised Imelda, who was reunited with her natural parents on Thursday. PHOTOGRAPHS: JANET KNIGHT



In May 1982, Salvadorean military helicopters and trucks descended on Chalatenango in an operation recalled locally as the "May Massacre".

For a week, the troops killed hundreds of civilians, torched villages, burned crops and chased thousands of peasants into the mountains. The operation included the Bellosco Battalion — nicknamed the "Gringo Battalion" because it was trained in the US.

After days of fleeing with her mother and her six-month-old son Nelson, María Magdalena, then 16, was awakened one morning by the sounds of soldiers and gunfire. She tried to run but a soldier grabbed her by the arm and led her away.

"There were already about 200 people there, and they were taking away the children. Then they began to use their radios to call the

**'I feel like I'm back home. All the faces look so familiar'**

— Gina (Imelda), the daughter of José and Victoria Lafnez

children became "a logistical problem".

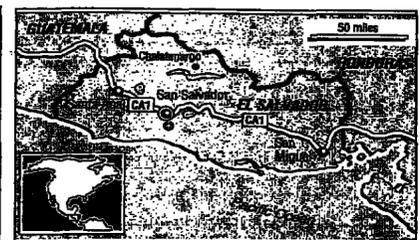
He said: "The mission of the armed forces is not capturing children, but this began to happen."

Walt Cargila, a former US special forces sergeant major who served in El Salvador, said he knew the military rounded up children. "I never did follow up, because I knew the military went out of their way to make sure the kids were safe."

Alberto de Jesús Quijada, a former Salvadorean sergeant, said troops received orders to collect all children under 12. The children were to be turned over to the Red Cross, although some were kept on the base as "assistants".

Mr de Jesús said that, unlike their parents, many of whom supported the FMLN, the children had not been "contaminated by Marxism".

Rafael Calles, the investigations co-ordinator for the



**Recent history:**  
March 1982: Decades of military rule and with election of Constituent assembly; civil war between FMLN guerrillas and US-backed government troops intensifies.  
1985-1991: Numerous rounds of peace talks are held between the government and guerrillas. Fighting continues.  
January, 1992: Peace plan signed in Mexico City; UN monitors transition.  
March 1993: "Truth Commission" reports on death-squad atrocities.  
March 1994: First post-war presidential elections won by Armando Calderón Fournier of the ultra-right Arena party.

**The facts:**  
Population: 6 million  
Area: 8,124 square miles  
GNP: per capita (purchasing power parity, US-\$100): 3.3 (1994)  
Life expectancy: 67  
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 live births): 42 (1994, US by comparison = 8)  
Adult literacy: 29 per cent (1995)  
Value of foreign debt: 20 per cent of GNP  
Main exports: coffee, cotton, sugar.

Let's a salute of the US-backed government forces in action during El Salvador civil war.

Source: World Development Report 1996, AP.

Association in Search of Disappeared Children, said he believes the children were taken as a way of easing soldiers' consciences.

"It was demoralising to the troops to kill children and also reinforcing to them to take them away," he said. "It also made the families more afraid."

As the May Massacre continued into June 1982, Francisca Romero and her family fled north towards Honduras. But they were cut off by government troops. In the chaos, Francisca hid behind a bush with her 2-year-old son and watched in horror as a soldier grabbed Ely and dragged her and several other children to a helicopter.

"One old fat soldier was shouting that they should kill them," said Francisca. "But another one said: 'No, no, we have to take them.'"

"You can't imagine how one's heart can be crushed to see these kinds of things. It's a wound that doesn't heal."

Ely was seven at the time and remembers how government troops shot her father and — as she stood crying over his body — scooped her up.

In Chalatenango city, she stayed with about 50 children in a house run by the Red Cross. "The Red Cross people told us we shouldn't tell anyone what happened to us," said Ely. Now 21, she is married with a two-year-old son and was reunited with her mother two years ago.

The Geneva Convention states: "Children shall be provided with the care and aid they require, and in particular all appropriate steps shall be taken to facilitate the reunion of families temporarily separated."

But the Salvadorean Red Cross, which prides itself on humanitarian neutrality, did not assume that role. Instead, it acted as a courier for the military. Critics say it allowed children to disappear into the vortex of war. Its role has led to inquiries from the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

Janice Elmora, a US embassy officer from 1986 to 1990, said both the ICRC and the Salvadorean Red Cross sided with the military during the war — despite claims of neutrality.

"The Red Cross was not exactly an unbiased observer," said Ms Elmora. "The Association in Search

of Disappeared Children has tried to obtain records of children transported by the Red Cross. But officials said a 1986 earthquake destroyed most of the records.

Catherine Martin, a former ICRC delegate in El Salvador now at its office in Geneva, said she encouraged the local Red Cross to co-operate.

But she doubted that children had been abducted. "You know how it works in Central America," she said. "It's very common to abandon a child..."

**C**HILDREN have been located as far away as France and Italy and as near as the main Salvadorean air force base outside San Salvador. In the village of Llano Grande, residents said troops poured over a nearby mountain one day and handed out children.

"An officer came by and he told us they were looking for help from the community," said Benjamin Casco Palma, aged 63. "They said the children they had were orphans."

At Children's Village SOS, a private orphanage in a San Salvador suburb, investigators discovered eight missing children. Still unclear is how many of the missing children ended up among the thousands who were adopted during the war. Whether a child was adopted often depended on an orphanage's policy.

But while the children adjusted to their new lives, their parents continued to flee the terror of their old ones.

After losing her infant son Nelson — later renamed Juan Carlos Serrano — María Magdalena Ramos escaped to a refugee camp in Honduras. For the next 12 years she had a recurring nightmare: "I remembered [the soldiers] told me he was going to serve the government, and all the times I was coming his birthdays in my head," she said. "I thought that if this war doesn't end, and he joins the army he could come here and kill me without knowing I'm his mother."

But the torment didn't end even after she was reunited with her son. On that day in Chalatenango, Juan Carlos was sullen and disoriented. He didn't recognise his natural mother. No longer Nelson Anivar Ramos, the boy stared at his mother. "Why did you abandon me?" he asked. — The Boston Globe.

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HOW quiet 10,000 people can be. As the sun shined on the 18th green...

Absolute hush. A one-iron followed by a gunbarrel six-iron had left a 56-year-old grandfather a putt of no more than six feet for a round of 65.

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Elis... heir-apparent

ing machine the game has known definitely staked it. The ball struck the rim of the hole and tipped out...

All the way round, Nicklaus had gathered the crowds like the good old days as he forged down the fairways with his Barney Ruble wit...

As he walked up the final fairway to a tumultuous reception he removed his hat...

Nicklaus, who had won seven major titles before Els was born, was completing his fourth birdie of the morning at the 10th just as Els was lacerating a two-iron into the middle of the nearby 7th green.

Els plays his golf with the deceptive languor of someone propelling a punt down a summer backwash, taking a high score with the same equanimity as a low one...

At the long 7th, for example, he said: "I sorta shanked a drive, hit a two-iron short and a sand wedge to four feet for a regulation birdie."



The reverse wave... Nicklaus acknowledges the applause at the 18th

Day 2 at the Open

Ace in the hole

The 9th was the toughest birdie of all the par-three holes on the first day but Paul McGinley's hole-in-one yesterday changed all that.



Tops and tales

- Monday 7/23: The 1994 Tumberly Open winner claimed to be 'lurking' happily after a first round 68.
Tuesday 7/24: The South African wanted it tougher at the top. 'I would like the wind to blow just to separate the guys who are hitting the ball well from those who are hitting it badly.'
Wednesday 7/25: Missed the cut yesterday but has been let off 48 for snatching his putt in public anger during Thursday's 74.
Thursday 7/26: Bogeys the final two holes but a 147 total was never going to take Woosie on. 'I just didn't get a feel for the course, said the man who defied odds to win the Scottish Open.
Friday 7/27: The 43-year-old player feared his career was finished earlier this year after he damaged a disc in his back suffering from a slipped disc.
Saturday 7/28: The double US Amateur champion and Ryder Cup stalwart Cory Pavin marks out on 59-year-old Jack Nicklaus after both Americans shot 86 yesterday to challenge.
Sunday 7/29: No major double for Jones this year. The man who caused panic in Detroit by winning last month's US Open, coming from nowhere as a qualifier, took a 146 total means an early return to Phoenix.

Jack's back: another golden day for the old Bear

David Davies finds Nicklaus happy, sociable and only one shot off the pace

OVER the years he has earned almost every adjective in the book. Yesterday, though, may have seen his first jovial Jack. The old Bear, in a phrase that springs readily to mind, but it is amazing what rounds of 69 and 66 can do for a man when he is aged 56 and playing in the Open Championship.

At the long 7th, for example, he said: "I sorta shanked a drive, hit a two-iron short and a sand wedge to four feet for a regulation birdie."

But the ice melted as quickly as it arrived. He was next asked whether playing the Senior Tour had helped his confidence.

championship. Surely it was worth coming to the Open just for that? "You don't have to put the gas in my aeroplane," he said, "or pay the hotel bill for the wife and kids. Let me tell you, that's a very expensive ovation."

"I'll continue to come as long as I feel I can be in contention. I only enjoy it if I can compete. I don't want to be a ceremonial golfer; I have a hard time with that."

Second-round scores

Table of golf scores for the second round, listing player names and their scores on various holes.

Disaster of the day

Carl Mason came to the 17th as joint leader on eight under. A triple-bogey seven, then a bogeyed 10th, soon put a banana skin under that.



Affliction of the week

'I couldn't make a backswing and if you can't make a backswing you can't play golf. I could only take the club back high-high. It's the weirdest thing that's ever happened to me.'

Rugby League

South Wales set for rapid elevation to Super status

SOUTH WALES currently sixth in the Second Division, will become Super League's 13th club next season. The Welshman were 'fast-tracked' by a specially convened meeting of clubs in Leeds yesterday.

Results

Table of sports results including Soccer, Rugby League, Tennis, and Cycling.

Sport in brief

Mark Petchey became Britain's last survivor in the Manchester Challenge at Didsbury when he reached the semi-finals with an impressive 6-1, 6-3 victory over the Scottish Edible Scotch.

Baker-Finch tailed off

AN BAKER-FINCH, the winner of the 1991 Open, finished at the tail of the field at Lytham. After missing 29 cuts at successive tournaments on the US Tour, the 35-year-old Australian left as a broken man after shooting a second-round 94 to finish on 162 - a massive 20 over par.

Weekend fixtures

Table of weekend fixtures for various sports including Soccer, Rugby League, and Cricket.

Ascot Racecourse DE DEERS DIAMOND DAY Saturday 27th July BOOK TICKETS NOW 0171 413 3355

THE OLYMPIC GAMES

THE BBC CONNECTION: Frank Keating meets Britain's best-known Olympic commentator . . .

# Coleman mustered one more time

**D**AVID COLEMAN is off and running. Last night he scribbled his 10th opening ceremony for BBC television. He was 70 this year.

The extravagant gala nonsense was no more than a training center for Coleman's larynx and adjectival thesaurus. He has a week yet till he settles at his blocks, bites his tongue for that split second of stillness and quietude before, at a single frightening gun, shot, his world explodes into noise and activity and eight men come at him full pelt diagonally from his left — and he has less than 10 seconds not only to identify them and call the race but to judge which one is a millionth ahead or a millisecond behind. Ten seconds is a long time in commentating.

Three score years and 10, and the squawking eminence

the hot favourite was the local lad, one Alexandros Chalkokondilos. One mention of his name would have near used up the 12.6sec the fellow finished in.

But Coleman knows the feeling. "In the 1968 Games in Mexico the Greeks had another sprinter, and a good one too, called Papagiorgiopoulos, and there was also a Madagascan called Ravelomanatsoa. I just hoped, for my sake, that two of them would be blown away."

"No such luck. When they both qualified from their heats I couldn't believe it. I honestly used to pray at night they would be eliminated before the final."

"Especially the Greek boy was, but Ravelomanatsoa, who had the Christian name Jean-Louis further to complicate matters, did go all the way — although for my good fortune he was last in the final so he didn't demand a mention till the race had been won by Jim Hines."

Coleman won the Manchester Mile as a club runner in 1949. After an apprenticeship on local newspapers, his first commentary for BBC TV was on May 6 1954, the day Roger Bannister became the first man to run the mile under four minutes.

Having begun as a news reporter, Coleman was forced to revert to the role at the Munich Games of 1972 when terrorists held hostage a group of Israelis in the Olympic village. Eleven men were to die. His live hour-upon-hour commentary with pictures from just one locked-off camera riveted the nation. It was a broadcast of sustained and moving brilliance. "It was a day that changed the face of the Olympics, and of world sport, forever," says Coleman.

He reckons he nearly did not get past his first Olympics. He was interviewing Britain's swimming gold medalist Anita Lonsborough at the poolside in Rome. "She was still dripping wet and, with all the electrical cables lying about, I was told later we were both in grave danger of being electrocuted if my microphone had touched her."

Coleman has always been



Really quite remarkable . . . David Coleman has been commentating for the BBC for 42 years

*'I couldn't believe it. I honestly used to pray at night they would be eliminated before the final'*

of David Coleman OBE was further acknowledged this spring with his special award for lifetime achievement from the Royal Television Society.

"The first Olympic 100 metres he described was at Rome in 1960. Armin Hary, the self-coached Frankfurt office-worker, won it in a record-breaking blur in 10.2sec. Hary, Hayes, Hines, Borzov, Crawford, Wells, Lewis, Johnson, Christie . . . Coleman has been lucky that successive Olympic sprint champions have had surnames of no more than two syllables.

He admits he would not have been confident at his microphone as they lined up for the 100 metres at the first modern Olympics in Athens exactly a century ago, when

touchy about giving his name to Private Eye's long-running column of commentators' gaffes, Colemanballs. He insists that most of the tautology attributed to him had in fact been uttered by others. Certainly, he says, it was not

he who announced at Montreal's 800 metres in 1976 the immortal "and now Juanitorenna opens his legs and shows his cises".

Another moment that has been on his back ever since, he admits, came eight years

earlier at Mexico City, when he became so carried away at the winning resplendence by a clear eight metres of Britain's David Hemery in the 400m hurdles that he shrieked across the ocean: "And who cares who's third?" Well, as it

happens, John Sherwood of Sheffield did — as he took the gallant bronze medal to go with the silver — won only hours before in the long jump by his wife Sheila. Says Coleman: "It is a fair criticism that we do occasionally get

overenthusiastic, but there is always a great deal of excitement and pressure in the commentary box."

These Olympics are possibly the biggest international operation the BBC has mounted. It has shipped about

35 tonnes of equipment into the home of CNN television in Atlanta and, for the first time from an Olympics, the BBC will be relaying its pictures back to the UK using fibre-optic cable under the Atlantic.



Thinking big . . . Shaun Pickering looks good for Atlanta

. . . and Peter Nichols finds an athlete striving to live up to a famous family name

## Pickering will give it his best shot for his dad

**R**ON PICKERING died on February 13 1991. He sat on the stairs, took off his snow boots (he had just walked from the station) and died. His first sport was athletics; he was his fiercest critic, his strongest advocate and often his moral spine.

He never went to the Olympics as a competitor but he coached an Olympic champion, the long-jumper Lynn Davies, and attended 11 Games as a BBC commentator. "He was the brother I never had," David Coleman said at the memorial service.

Pickering married an Olympian in Jean Desforges, who won bronze in the sprint relay and finished fifth in the 80 metres hurdles in Helsinki in 1952. She was his girlfriend from

school and became his wife in 1964, soon after she won a long jump gold at the European Championships.

Yesterday Ron Pickering's son became an Olympian as well. Shaun Pickering was one of three British track and field athletes — David Strang and Tony Whiteman were the others — who chose to march in the opening ceremony. He flew in on Thursday night from Los Angeles, where he had been training. "He wanted to be at the opening ceremony for his dad's memory," said his mother.

Shaun Desforges Pickering was always a fit and fast athlete; he inherited his father's substantial frame, no disadvantage for a budding shot putter, and in 1986 he represented Wales in the Commonwealth

Games, finishing eighth in the shot and ninth in the hammer and discus. But still athletics was something he toyed with.

Eighteen months ago, shortly after his 33rd birthday, he seized what was surely a last opportunity. He resigned from his marketing job and on the fourth anniversary of his father's death flew to Los Angeles and began training seriously.

Pickering developed his speed and strength (his weight went up to more than 300lb) and his spinning technique improved vastly. In this year's Olympic trials he finished second and a day later was named in the British team, having already achieved the qualifying distance.

Two weeks later on his

mother's birthday, July 4, he wrote in her card: "I'm glad we've been able to make history together. They had become the first mother and son to be selected for British Olympic teams."

"He has spent a lot of money getting there," said his mother. "I just hope he never needs it in the future. But that's how a mother would think, isn't it? I told him I will be there in spirit and Dad will be looking down on him."

Jean often hears her husband's voice on the old commentaries, especially at this time of year. "I used to tell him when he made mistakes, I was his sounding-board," she said. "But he was good, you know. I listen to the broadcasts now and he was good."

The Ron Pickering Fund, set up with donations after his death, has helped 16 young athletes in the British team. Jean is proud of that inheritance but concerned for the sport they both loved.

"He would have made such a difference now. He would have protected the sport. Ron predicted it, you know. He said that if you hand over the sport to the agents and the marketing men you lose the ethics." She stopped there. There was still so much unfinished business. The fund takes a deal of managing and there were lectures she wanted to publish.

But this is Shaun's hour too. "If you speak to him," she said, "tell him to give me a ring." Mum was just a little worried.

## Horses first to face stern test of heat and humidity

### Eventing

#### Frank Keating

**T**HE horses, one might say, are the guinea-pigs. The three-day event's opening dressage kicks off the equestrian programme tomorrow and with it will come the first evidence of how the four-footers are going to cope with Atlanta's oppressive and possibly dangerous heat and humidity.

Horses sweat at almost three times the rate of humans, with the corresponding likelihood of serious dehydration. Fears for Tuesday's cross-country stage were voiced yesterday by Patricia Forkan, vice-president of the US Humane Society. "To subject animals to a speed and endurance test under the rigours of this weather is unconscionable."

Hugh Thomas, the Englishman charged with overseeing the whole event as technical delegate to the International Equestrian Federation, said: "It comes to it, we will [handicraft]. We are not going to go blithely on if conditions get to a stage where we can't be confident about the horses."

He was supported by Dr Leo Jeffcott, the Cambridge vet: "If we feel the health and welfare of the horses could be prejudiced, we will be advising the judges. But it looks unlikely that very dangerous temperatures will occur when the horses are on the course."

We shall see soon enough if such optimism is valid. But even in the sparkling bliss of a fresh English spring at Badminton or Burghley, this Olympic three-day would be difficult to call because, for the first time, there are separate competitions for teams and individuals. Indeed, only after the course inspection today will Britain's selectors decide which riders and horses go for which event.

They have a fair blend to choose from: such seasoned stalwarts as Ian Stark (three silvers from the Olympics of 1984 and 1988); Saren Dixon, who was at the Seoul Games; and Mary King, whose King William is the only horse with Olympic experience — in Barcelona's heat.

The British chef d'equipe Charlie Lane said yesterday that horses and riders had acclimatised well. "There was some concern when we arrived, but no problems. We are now happy an appropriate competition can be run and we cannot wait to get mounted."

Boxers Kelly and Magee emerge from the troubled Ardoyne with a success story to put the rest to shame

## Holy Trinity has double vision from conflict in the ring

### Boxing

#### Michael Walker

**N**ORTHERN IRELAND has had little to sing about in recent days and, against such a background of civil unrest, diversions of any kind shrink in their importance. But when Damsen Kelly and Brian Magee step into the Olympic boxing ring in Atlanta in four days' time, a remarkable sporting institution in West Belfast will add a page to its impressive scrapbook.

The Holy Trinity Boxing Club in the Ardoyne is supplying both boxers, an achievement which the combined population of England, Scotland and Wales could not match. With a reduction in Olympic boxing numbers from 600 to 320, qualification has never been more difficult. Reaching the quarter-finals of the European championships was required for automatic selection, and whereas Kelly and Magee did this for Ireland, only David Burke of the Salisbury club in Liverpool managed it from the rest of Great Britain. The heavy-weight Fola Okesola from London has since been added to the British team but only because of a vacancy caused by a Danish withdrawal.

This unprecedented difficulty in qualifying for the Olympics is why Michael Hawkins, one of the Holy Trinity trainers, says: "Success is simply being there. Hawkins is well placed to judge. One of six boxing brothers, he has been with the Ardoyne club from its first day 25 years ago.

The phrase "25 years of this" is also synonymous with the Troubles. Although the Holy Trinity club has remained relatively untouched by the surrounding strife, its origins are inextricably linked with the time and the place since the first premises were donated by the British Army, not long arrived in Belfast.

"It was an old wooden hut," says Hawkins. "It was about 67ft. At the beginning of the Troubles and it was used half as a youth club and half for boxing. My mother and father were on the committee: we got a couple of functions together and got a bit of gear." By 1975 the club was firmly on its feet, even though, Hawkins recalls, it had "only one ring and I can remember snow coming in through half the roof."

The original building, though, went up in flames "nothing sinister," Hawkins stresses — and a more permanent structure was quickly built. "With 90 per cent unemployment in the area there

was no problem getting bricklayers or plasterers," he says.

The Holy Trinity soon produced its first Irish senior amateur champion; his name was Gerry Hawkins, a light-flyweight and one of the brothers. He went on to box in the Moscow Olympics, where he lost to the eventual winner, and then won a silver medal in Los Angeles.

No further Holy Trinity Olympians emerged until Kelly and Magee, but several have won European, world and Commonwealth medals, including Jim Webb's 1984 gold in Victoria, and 24 Irish senior titles. "Every year we are producing champions, we've got the best club record in Ireland," says another Hawkins brother, Harry. With Michael he is involved in the day-to-day training of the club's boxers although he has remained in Belfast whereas Michael, an Irish Olympic coach since 1988, is already in the United States.

The four-man Irish boxing team — with Francis Barrett and Cathal O'Grady from the Republic — have been in Fort Lauderdale acclimatising, and Michael Hawkins's presence means he can keep an eye on the middleweight Magee and flyweight Kelly in particular.

"Danien's dedication in training is fantastic," he says. "He's got skill, he will win, but he's a bad loser — terrible

— and he thinks too much. He trains too much as well. We sent him home from the qualifying training camp for a week because of over-training. He was just too fit and we have to get them to peak twice."

The 20-year-old Magee is "similar", according to Hawkins. "These two just stroll along, two of the quietest men you could meet in your life. The pressure doesn't seem to be on in the ring either, they just fight and move. Any fool can fight but these two are class boxers. If you turn your back on them they're down on the floor doing press-ups or sit-ups."

Kelly, 23, is probably the better medal prospect, and the reduced number of competitors means that only four wins are needed for a bronze. The Holy Trinity, though, is used to great feats. In the 1998 European Youth Championships Michael Blaney and Paddy Brown won gold medals on the same night. Now the Trinity is dreaming of doubles again.

But it is not deluded about the size of the task. There will be no easy touches in Atlanta. By way of illustration, of the 60 boxers from Eastern Europe 36 represent the nine independent nations that once were part of the Soviet Union. In Barcelona there were only 12, one for each weight category.



Knowing the ropes . . . Magee, left, and Kelly training hard in West Belfast

Handwritten Arabic text: ٥٤٦١ من الاصل

THE OLYMPIC GAMES



Talent pool... Britain's Nick Gillingham tests the waters at Georgia Tech and Karen Pickering prepares to do the same



PHOTOGRAPHS: MICHAEL STEELE

British resurface after plumbing the depths

Swimming

David Hopps

Even when Barcelona was at its most seductive four years ago, one could not stroll far without stumbling across another American wearing a T-shirt proclaiming "It'll be better in Atlanta..."

rumoured to have flown in to Atlanta just in case the team get into further difficulty. Nick Gillingham's bronze in the 200 metres breaststroke in Barcelona was their solitary medal, the worst British return in the Olympics for 20 years.

to the Canadian Olympic swimming team since 1972, was installed in the top job as from October. One of his first tasks will be to change Britain's swimming culture. For Australia, with its considerable coastal population, swimming is a vital part of national identity.

day, the final night of the finals is swash with possibilities. Perkins is a national icon whose lost supremacy has bewildered an entire country; Smith's improvement, by contrast, has been startling but as yet he would hardly rate a second look in Britain if he swam naked with a thistle in his teeth.

of reaching finals. So too does the freestyle swimmer Paul Palmer, who has caused some misgivings by competing over 200m, 400m and 1500m, as well as two relays, but who insists that he will not be unduly taxed before he competes over his strongest distance, the 400m, on Tuesday.

of the bigger fibes of Olympic history can be exposed. When the Atlanta bidding committee stood in front of the International Olympic Committee six years ago, they said with a straight face that the average summer temperature in their city was 78F (25C).

The reality? Atlanta's average high between July and August 5 in 1994 was 96.5F, exactly the same as in 1995. Yesterday it hovered around 95, with 100 expected in the coming week.

Gamble on Giles may prove costly in hot competition

Hockey

Pat Rowley

Britain's officials will be sweating on the consequences of the gambles they took a few weeks ago when they revealed their teams for the Atlanta competitions which start today.

son, not far behind MacDonald as a goalkeeper, better fitted those criteria. The women's team will do extremely well to repeat the bronze medals of 1992 but in Karen Brown, Kath Johnson and the goalkeepers Hilary Rose and Jo Thompson they have players of genuine class.

At Longo last?

Cycling

Stephen Bierley

Huge crowds were out in the streets of Atlanta to watch the Olympic flame being brought into the city, and more will line the sidewalks tomorrow when the women's road race gets the cycling events under way.

Redgrave set on fourth gold

Rowing

Martin Palmer

STEVEN REDGRAVE launches his attempt to become the fourth man in history to win gold in four successive Games when he teams up with Matthew Pinsent in the coxless pairs tomorrow.

Optimism rises for touches of gloss on the mat

Judo

Peter Nichols

HAD the Olympics been held in 1995 there would have been general gloom surrounding the chances of Britain's judo team.

Today in Atlanta

- Baseball: US v Nicaragua (w), Cuba v Australia, Japan v Holland (w). Baseball: Australia v Korea (w), Greece v Yugoslavia (w), China v Angola (w), Lithuania v Georgia (w), Puerto Rico v Brazil (w), US v Argentina (w). Football: Italy v Spain (w), Argentina v Germany (w), South Korea v Great Britain (w).

Tour de France Riis ready for final combat as Moncassin leads charge of the sprinters

William Fotheringham in Bordeaux on how the dominant Dane set up sure victory

THE extent to which Bjarne Riis has dominated the final week of this Tour is simply illustrated. When he took the race lead 12 days ago in the Italian Alps, Evgeny Berzin, Tony Rominger and Abraham Olano were within a minute. Going into today's time-trial through the vineyards to Saint Emilion, Riis has a 11 minute lead.

had to attack to gain time whenever the time-trialists have looked weak. He has been so aggressive that he leads the race's *combinatoire* prize, awarded after the daily points awarded for aggression have been added up — a rare feat for a Tour winner in recent years.

wearer of the green points jersey, and the Italian Fabio Baldato. Crowds of a similar size to those that welcomed the Tour in Holland three weeks ago flocked from the beaches of Biarritz to wave farewell as the peloton quit the Basque Country at high speed.

each man has been promised a bonus of £200 for each *combinatoire* point. Wauters netted 11 points, which equals over £2,000 for a hot afternoon's work.

THE Linford Christie saga was not the real will-be, won't-be issue of the Olympic 100 metres. Namibia's Frankie Fredericks has yet to confirm whether he will turn up for the event, yet so far as the bookmakers are concerned that is just about all he needs to do to win.

Sports Betting Short-priced Fredericks running short of time

Julian Turner THE Linford Christie saga was not the real will-be, won't-be issue of the Olympic 100 metres. Namibia's Frankie Fredericks has yet to confirm whether he will turn up for the event, yet so far as the bookmakers are concerned that is just about all he needs to do to win.

ive baptism in the African Nations Cup. In the women's tournament, the US look gold-medal bankers as reflected in odds of 4-5 (Stan James). British team performance: City Index have made up a spread on the final medal tally of the whole British team — runners, rowers, archers and all. They award 25 points for gold, 10 for silver and five for bronze.





14 THE LEADER PAGE

# Shaming scandal of CJD

**S**UDDENLY, the rush of honesty at the Department of Health in March over the dangers of BSE — even when senior ministers within the Cabinet were urging silence — becomes more understandable. It looks like a combination of guilt, shame, and urge to compensate for earlier crimes. Yesterday's High Court ruling on Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (CJD), the human form of mad cow disease, has nothing to do with BSE. This action was about CJD's other main cause: human growth hormone. The eight families which brought the suit had all lost children through human growth hormone treatment. There are few more horrible deaths. Yet what the court action has exposed is negligence at the highest level. Almost unbelievably, officials within the department and staff at the Medical Research Council (MRC) failed to pass on warnings about the dangers of such treatment to the key committee of clinicians which was supervising the therapeutic programme. Although officials were warned of the dangers of pituitary-infected CJD passing into the treatment process, the clini-

cians were not. The court concluded that such negligence was "materially" responsible for children in the case developing CJD.

It is worth noting the way CJD behaves. The disease, which can take years to incubate, then develops rapidly. Victims suffer multiple problems, beginning with unsteadiness and then visibly declining through incontinence, paralysis, blindness, dementia and death, usually within a year of the first signs of the disease. By the end many victims are unable to speak, unable to swallow and have to be fed through tubes inserted in their stomachs. The distress caused to victims' families is not hard to imagine. The fear which such deaths have generated within families which have survived is similarly understandable.

About 2,000 children have been treated with human growth hormone. The children were suffering from stunted growth. The hormone was extracted from the pituitary glands of 900,000 corpses. It was extremely successful in increasing growth by up to one foot. What began as a clinical trial under the MRC had by 1977 become a therapeutic programme under the Department of Health. It was brought to an end in 1985 — after three deaths in the US from the use of the hormone — and since then, genetically engineered hormone has been used. Meanwhile, 16 children from the British programme have died and another three are terminally ill.

From the beginning, the Department of Health and the MRC denied liability. Mr Justice Morland made short shrift of such arguments yesterday. Quite so. The

judge was careful to note the dangers of hindsight, the need to remember the state of scientific knowledge at the time, and to shut out of his mind the suffering which the victims experienced. But he also noted that the first glimmering of an infectious agent emerged in the 1960s and 1970s. By 1977 the risks of using pituitary glands of people suffering from dementia had been established. The precise molecular size and weight of the CJD infectious agent has still not been determined. But the judge was in no doubt that all reasonable practicable steps should have been taken to minimise danger. This the Department of Health and the MRC failed to do.

The judge made another important point in his 84-page ruling: the advantages of such a complex scientific issue being resolved through an inquisitorial rather than adversarial procedure. Yet ministers consistently rejected petitions — and parliamentary pressure — for a public inquiry into the scandal. Australia showed the way. Its public inquiry showed scientists did believe CJD could be transmitted through pituitary hormones and disclosed the fact that British mortuary technicians, who were being paid 20p per gland, were sending glands of people who died of dementia for processing. The need now is to provide the bereaved — and the psychiatrically harmed survivors — with proper compensation. Technically, only one of yesterday's litigants may qualify, but this is no time for such a mean-minded legalistic approach. It has lasted too long already. Negligence needs proper and full compensation.

# Rekindle the flame

**T**HE OLYMPIC GAMES were supposed to have started with a race between Pelops and Oenomaus, who used to challenge his daughter's boyfriends and then put them to death. That may or may not be true, but this year's Games which start today will, like all previous ones, inescapably reflect the environment in which they are taking place. This time the agenda for what used to be amateurism's supreme moment has been set by the commercial realities of television scheduling and the balance sheet of the Coca-Cola company. The parched streets of Atlanta have been cleansed of beggars and other Olympic distractions while the world's best athletes train in impossibly hot conditions protected by armed guards from evil forces outside, while expert teams test for drug abuse. This time the Olympics are best watched from a distance.

Yet it is the abiding joy of these games that behind the undoubted sleaze and the hype there really is an Olympic spirit within that elevates them to a much higher plane than other events including mere world championships. With the exception of a handful of sports like tennis and football, the Olympic Games are regarded by the participants as the highest achievement of human physical endeavour in which a gold medal is coveted even more than a mere world record. Only the Olympics could

have spawned a film like Chariots of Fire.

We even convince ourselves that it doesn't matter that Great Britain isn't much good at the Olympics. The largest number of gold medals we have won in a single year since 1928 was six in Melbourne in 1956. Even when we were the bournie in 1948 we only managed to scrape hosts in 1948. Which makes it all the more puzzling that we scooped 56 in London in 1908 — a phenomenon which may have had something to do with some of the obscure sports embraced by the Olympics including tug-of-war, polo and rugby where Australia (which took gold) was the only other competitor.

The only completely predictable thing about the Olympics is that the United States will win. Now that the former Soviet Union has shattered into smaller units, the supremacy of the US is not easy to challenge. It ought to be. It is time the high command at the Olympics published a separate league table adjusting the results for the size and wealth of each country as measured by national income per capita. This would demote America — which regularly punches below its weight — and would elevate poor countries like Kenya which do remarkably well with scant resources.

The country most in need of improvement is India. It has the second largest population in the world (865 million) yet didn't win a single medal in the last two Olympics, nor in the last two world championships. Maybe, after all, they are the standard bearers of the true Olympian spirit — to take part rather than to win.

**MARTIN WOOLLACOTT** on an identity crisis among the Transcaucasian capitals hoping to enter Europe despite demonstrating shaky proof of democratic reforms and their poor human rights records

# Stuck in a great cultural divide

**I**N THE hot summer of 1913, a schoolteacher born in St Petersburg is addressing his mainly Azerbaijani, Armenian and Georgian pupils at the Imperial Russian Humanistic High School in Baku. Some scholars, he says, believe the lands to which the boys belong are Asian, while others, in view of Transcaucasia's cultural evolution, believe that this country should be considered part of Europe. "It can therefore be said, my children, that it is partly your responsibility as to whether our town should belong to progressive Europe or to reactionary Asia."

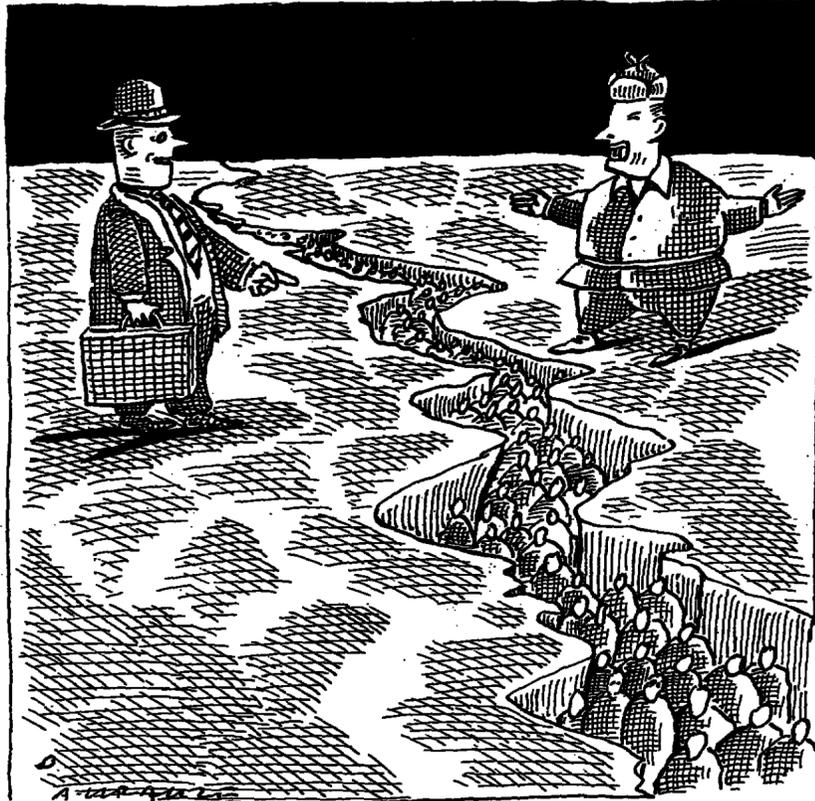
The scene is from Ali and Nino, by Kurban Said, a curious and fantastical novel of inter-racial romance and hatred which some experts on "Europe" will so, how does that change Europe? This is part of the larger issue of how to reconcile the traditions and present situation of western and eastern European states.

The only organisation which comprehensively spans this wider European panoply is the Council of Europe, an early vehicle of pan-European aspirations which, sidelined after the Common Market emerged, came to exercise the function of a bridge between Western European members and non-members of the stronger grouping. It specialised in moral matters — human rights, minorities, justice,

law, and social policy. Europe's conscience, some would say.

Lately, another role has been thrust upon it. Eastern Europe was desperate for some form of incorporation, yet the EU, the OECD, Nato, the WEU — the existing political, military, and economic organisations being chosen to incorporate countries whose standards, in everything from the conduct of elections to the conduct of wars, fall below those hitherto upheld has not been just on critics. One, after Russia's recent admission concluded that the Council of Europe had become a "Church of All Sinners."

The countries joining or hoping to join after the first group of relatively respectable central European and Baltic states were, some of them, fighting wars at odds with their own minorities, and only lightly grounded in democracy. Their prisons the Balkans and the art gallery to prove that Azerbaijan, while giving Islam its place, is a civilised country in the European sense. In Armenia, you will be taken to the great churches



truly radical improvements, or were they better if they were brought in, so that their progress could be monitored and assisted more closely?

Daniel Tarschys, the Secretary-General of the Council, believes there was no real alternative to inclusion. "There is a historic opportunity to promote democracy and human rights in Central and Eastern Europe," he says. "Closing off that opportunity by insisting on unrealistically high standards would be foolish." Tarschys, a former Swedish Liberal MP and member of the Council of Europe parliamentary assembly, a professor of political science at Stockholm University and an academic expert on the Soviet Union, is a man for the times.

Certainly, there is no mistaking the hunger for Europe in the Transcaucasus. In Baku, you will be shown the bazaar and the art gallery to prove that Azerbaijan, while giving Islam its place, is a civilised country in the European sense. In Armenia, you will be taken to the great churches

near Yerevan, some dating to the fourth century, to see fragments of Noah's Ark and of the spear that pierced Christ's side, to prove that Armenia was, in effect, Christian and European before Europe even existed. In Georgia they will tell you that the Western image of strife and banditry is a terrible misrepresentation. Armenia and Georgia see themselves as having been betrayed by Europe in the aftermath of the first world war and left in the lurch, again, after the first outbreaks of ethnic trouble and the consequent covert Russian interventions of the early nineties, when the West decided that the Caucasus was part of Russia's "backyard."

Yet they, and Azerbaijan, too, still crave admission to one of Europe's clubs. They view membership in the Council as a symbolic acceptance that they are seen as Europeans, not barbarians, and, perhaps unrealistically, as a way station toward association with the European Union. They need to be in, now that

Russia is a member, to assert an equality of status with their unpredictable neighbour and to get what protection they can from the Strasbourg mechanisms. And they need to be in, so as to compete with each other on a new stage. The ethnic conflicts that disrupted the southern Caucasus are all now quiescent but they are far from settled. The difficult truth is that the leaders of Nagorno-Karabakh are highly unlikely to give up their de facto independence for an autonomy offered by a government in Baku which they do not trust. Abkhazia, although weaker than Nagorno-Karabakh, has similar feelings about Tbilisi, although South Ossetia is a somewhat more hopeful case. Even if Russia in future cultivates a more responsible approach, rather than aiming to keep these quarrels in being for its own devious purposes, there is no guarantee of progress.

Whatever happens, the contradiction between the principles of self-determination and

territorial integrity, together with the allied issue of whether Russian imperial power will emerge in new forms will henceforth be pivotal in the broader Europe. A "circle of secession", as President Eduard Shevardnadze of Georgia calls it, links Nagorno-Karabakh with Abkhazia and Chechnia, and, more distantly, with Northern Ireland, Corsica, and the Basque country. While some may strive to profit from a neighbour's problems, all have a common interest in the failure of rebellion. Similarly, a "circle of interest" links countries who fear Soviet restoration. It is aspoite that the mission to Transcaucasia was led by the Estonian foreign minister, whose country presently holds the presidency of the Council. Another circle still links Western Europe's democratic preoccupations with the aspirations of Eastern European countries. Politics, war, foreign policy, and moral ambition are being dizzily merged as Europe strives to become one place.

# Talking through our bowler hats



Jeremy Hardy

**A**T THE moment, British people have an unprecedented interest in the Irish Question. Phone-ins and letters pages are full of suggestions like, "Let's make every person in Northern Ireland into an independent state; then we'd soon see the Man of Violence come to their senses," and, "Perhaps if there was a tax on sectarianism, the sectarianism would think twice."

To be fair to the great British public, the blame for the present situation is being directed mostly — and rightly — at the Unionists, the RUC and, by implication, the British government — the political wing of the British army — which must take responsibility for the current mess, and for the problem in its entirety.

But broadcast journalists this week seemed pre-occupied with trying to get Gerry Adams to condemn the IRA. It would be gratifying to hear Gerry Adams denounce the IRA in a BBC interview, only for the shock of the interviewer would get.

For a moment they'd think, "I've done it! This is the pinnacle of my career!" Then they'd grow panicky and mumble, "But they will still listen to you, won't they? I mean, they won't mind you denouncing them. You might still be able to swing another ceasefire, eh? Maybe you should withdraw that last remark."

It might sound extreme to suggest that British broadcasters have contributed to violence. But the refusal to talk calmly and sensibly about political violence can only encourage it.

Treating with contempt those who advocate a non-military strategy weakens them within their movement. Refusing to look at the reasons for the problem, and giving the Irish the impression that the British have absolutely no understanding of Ireland, reinvigorates those who argue that a bomb sharpens the perception.

This is not to say that Trimble and Paisley go unchallenged. They certainly get a rougher time than the spokesmen for the loyalist paramilitaries, who've never been asked what they think of the "any Catholic will do" strategy. Of course, it would be a pointless question, they're holding their ceasefire at the time of writing and we're all very thankful.

But while the republican ceasefire held, Adams was no less harangued than he is now. The media can't decide whether they despise him because they think he controls the IRA or because they think he has no control over it at all. The attitude veers between, "This man is a terrorist," and "This man isn't much of a terrorist so there's hardly any point talking to him."

The precise nature of the relationship between Sinn Fein and the IRA is a source of fascination to journalists only because they genuinely don't know what it is. The only thing the media seem to be certain of whether or not it is true, is that Martin McGuinness is the leader of the IRA.

McGuinness doesn't seem to bug interviewers nearly as much as Gerry Adams. He denies paramilitary involvement, they assume he's lying. They're used to talking to ministers who he ably absolutely everything. But Adams confuses them. And they hate that.

Most people, however, don't feel the need to know more about Gerry Adams. They just want to see him involved in a solution that stops the killing. They could live with that.

# Smallweed



**T**HE ROW over "Kids" (Growth Clerk's unflattering description of his bright young strategic thinkers, rather than the cine-production featuring sex-obsessed New York yoo!) has not come from a

clear blue sky. As it emerged on Thursday that 37-year-old Treasury principal Helen Goodman, author of the think-the-unthinkable paper on the future (none) of the welfare state, was fuming at the Chancellor's dismissal of her "cranky" report, others were recalling rumblings 18 months back in the higher reaches of the civil service concerning the ill breeding of some of the new, self-made ministers.

One Home Office minister was alleged to be particularly abusive to his mandarins, and there were suggestions that, in parallel with the ethics code then being formulated and now in force, there ought to be a "manners" code under which civil servants would not be home to Mr Rude. Nothing came of it, although the Chancellor's brusquerie may bring the idea back to life.

**A**S PLENDID response to our competition for the three most useless books to grace the shelves of a privatised Bottomley Public Library. Who could fail to be gripped by My Days Are Numbered: A Career In Accountancy, Salad Days: A Life In Market Gardening, or Rolling The Loan: Helpful Hints For Aspiring Cricket Groundsmen (thank you, Jack Critchlow of Torquay)?

Then there is The Wit And Wisdom Of John Birt (Oonagh Lahe of London N10), Sash Snacks: Quick Party-Food Ideas For Orange Marches (Tim Harrison of Kingston, Surrey) and, echoing part of the Don Paterson poem that started it all, Water: A Culinary Guide (John Hobson of Devises).

He and the winner? It has to be John Bates of Glasgow; we enjoyed his two made-up suggestions (The Hesseine Handbook For Small

Businesses and, for the reference section, The Toltec-Cornish Dictionary Of Scientific And Technical Terms). But it was his real really-useless book that clinched it — The Challenges Of The XXI Century, a collection of articles by Polish communist party big-wigs, place-men and time-servers who, as late as 1988, still imagined they would be pushing people around in 2000 A.D. "I would be very happy to donate this last to Mrs Bottomley's first model privatised library," he writes. And we are very happy to donate our prize fazz to Mr Bates.

**M**EANWHILE, the libel courts are offering their best entertainment since the Old-England v New Brit square-up, featuring, respectively, Peregrine Worsthorne (Sunday Telegraph) and Andrew Neil (Tele-

Sunday Times and Sky) in January 1990. The former, you will recall, suggested persons like the latter, with their fondness for night-clubbing and so forth, ought really to find a line of work other than editing serious newspapers. New Brit triumphed, with £1,000 in damages. Six years later, the aristocratic Imran Khan faces cricketer's very own Andrew Neil, the talented but chippy Ian Botham. Will the jury find for Khan? Were the case being heard in the United States, all to paraphrase Disraeli, would be race, but the British love a lord, whatever their ethnic background.

Cast your mind back to ITV's series Department S, featuring an Interpol unit with a black boss (Dennis Alaba Peters). He had only to open his mouth for viewers to accept his boss-ship — he was simply far posher than any of the white char-

acters. Mission Impossible has been revived for the big screen, so is it not time to bring back the S men?

**S**PURT in Sussex is really going through the wars. While the county's former cricket captain defends himself in court, his main football team is all but homeless. Brighton sold the Goldstone ground, home for nearly a century, to save off the embarrassing attentions of the Insolvency Service, and they have to be out by May. Plans to share Fratton Park with Portsmouth have been shelved, and now the municipal authorities have said no to a scheme for a new stadium at Toads Hall Valley. Many years ago, in an attempt to persuade World Man to use the postcode, post offices across the county displayed jolly posters in which a colour bore a

slogan along the lines of "Seagulls over BN3 7DE" (the code for the ground). What now? "Seagulls over Returned Letter Branch"?

**T**HERE is a discreet but sizeable fraternity of non-legal types (Smallweed included) for whom the main attraction of the law reports in this and other newspapers is the intriguing, deadpan headlines. You know the sort of thing: "Bequest to cat's home was valid". "No right of possession in deceased's brain". "Unruly son responsible for eviction notice". But we had to wait for the Times on Thursday for perhaps the best ever. The nonchalant heading on a report from the International Court in The Hague read: "Use of nuclear weapons to be compatible with treaties." The report beneath contained the news that, provided such an action conformed with the general

rules of war, "particularly those of the principles and humanitarian law", then the threat of use or actual use of atomic weapons would be absolutely fine. Good, so that's settled then.

**A**S WITH Dr. Who, occasionally changes his human shape; now the time has come for him to grip the arm of his pretty assistant and for her to exclaim, "Doctor! What's wrong?" In a few minutes, the juvenile, Tom Baker, in manifestation with whom you have all put up so stolidly since April will transmogrify into the authoritative original, reminiscent of the late Jon Pertwee. Fade out the police box, fade in the BBC Radio-phonetic Workshop. Just time for the Master to docket: "Until next time — Doctor! Ha ha ha..."

Why Laid Commit



Handwritten text in Arabic script at the bottom of the page.

**The vast caravan park at Trecco Bay, above, like the rest of Britain, is braced this weekend for the great holiday exodus. But things are not as they were. On her first caravan break, JACI STEPHEN reports from the Welsh seaside resort where the fish and chips and candy-floss of her childhood are being replaced by family discos and upmarket nosh**

Sunny side up... The Jones's of Rhondda Valley (right) enjoy the life at Trecco Bay in Porthcawl, South Wales  
PHOTOGRAPHS: JEFF MORRAN



# Laugh? We very nearly did

There is great excitement in the Showdown Club, where six young women are lined up on stage, competing for the honour of being Miss Trecco Bay. Mark, being the host, is trying to cajole them, with his hand on her shoulder, into producing anything that might resemble a personality. "Come on!" he shouts at Debbie from Chichester. "React!" Pulling her on to the floor, he begs her to feign euphoria. "Pretend you've won £10 million. How do you feel?" Debbie is having none of it. She struggles free and tries to regain her composure before the 800-strong audience.

The host rubs his injured arm. Three days ago he was accidentally kicked during a Tauxan competition while checking the pulse of a plastic crocodile. "I'm really a magician," he says sadly.

The contest is one of the highlights of a holiday at Trecco Bay, Europe's largest single-owned caravan park. Two and a half thousand tents, most of them modern and electric, are lined up intimidatingly in rows after row along the coastline.

At high season, the camp is completely full. Some of the 10,000 holidaymakers come in short-term lets, others own their caravans, and then there are those who live in their mobile homes for all but two months of the year — from March to December, the maximum stay allowed for each holiday.

Last week, the first of the summer season's intake arrived, and I was among them. The caravan I had been allocated was smart and electric, complete with microwave and television. Imagine an Aga in a greenhouse and you will have some idea of the temperature.

Outside, the family from hell was playing football. Every ten seconds the ball crashed against the side of my van sending everything rocking. Three vans away a child was screaming. It was my first, and I was beginning to suspect, my last caravan holiday.

It is over 30 years since I last saw Trecco Bay. My mother in her hairdressing days worked in the site's salon and my brother and I spent each day in the Trecco Bears' Club.

Through a child's eyes, it was paradise: slot machines, rock, sand, sea. But I returned to find anarchy brewing behind the scenes and a feeling of history being eroded; the old guard of holiday-makers and their memories being evicted by the new guard, in the name of progress.

In the Castaways family bar, Phillip Griffiths sits at a window table with a pint of lager. A redundant miner, divorced and estranged from his children ("my wife turned them against me"), he is holidaying with his father. They have just received notices on their gas caravan and cannot afford to replace it with an electric one, soon to be the standard accommodation.

Outside the window, a couple holding hands are conducting a rotating table of plastic frogs. They look dubiously at the sign: "Every frog is a winner." A young boy runs to

the roundabout, chased by his mother: "Stephen, come yer bloody warrin' yew, come yer!"

The rattle of coins from next door's Funtasia mingles with children's screams of delight. Phillip sits with his back to it all. He is an unhappy man. He's lost his job, his wife and his children, and now he's about to lose his home. "I'm a bit deaf," he says, "I couldn't hear what the judge was saying in court, so I went along with everything."

He finds the people at Trecco Bay friendly and warm, just like the miners he worked with down the pit. He was happier then, he said, than he has ever been in his life.

Against the backdrop of the Bingo hall and fruit machines, he cuts a lonely figure as if, above ground, his whole self is

blinking with the light. "I was thinking about my sister today," he says. "Maria Diana. She died of a large heart. She had to be taken home from our holiday here when I was eight. A friend came down to tell us she had died; then my uncle came and took us home."

Among the throng of other holiday-makers, the increased expense of what used to be a cheap break is a familiar grievance. Traditionally, Trecco Bay was the most popular holiday venue among miners in Wales. During "Miners' Fortnight", hundreds of miners and their families descended from the valleys on to what they called "Hiya Butt Bay", after the familiar Welsh greeting, "Hiya, buwt".

Built among sand dunes, it had the air of any seaside resort: candy floss and toffee

apples, fruit machines, fish and chips and, just up the road at Coney Beach, an enormous funfair.

It had a sense of community; it was, just like the mining valleys, a place of shared interests and values. People enjoyed holidaying with their neighbours who, in caravans, were just a few feet further apart than they were in the terraced houses from which they had travelled.

Children loved it, teenagers found romance, and local youngsters came in from the town in search of excitement.

All that is changing, courtesy of the general manager, Kevin Luceock, and First Leisure which bought the site from EMI and Forte 10 years ago.

Luceock's aim is to change the culture and perception of Trecco Bay. Sandy paths have

now been replaced by Tarmac roads, there are plans for a food court, and there is not a flood of candy in sight.

It all costs money and, to those who have been going to the camp all their lives, it is a scheme to price the Welsh working classes out of the market.

"Culture!" says Jim Wills, a big cheese on the caravan owners' committee. "He's bloody English! What does he mean, 'trying to change the culture'? We don't want no English bugger coming down here and changing our Welsh culture."

Jim's wife, Betty, sits beside him, stroking her eight-year-old child, Tina. "Careful Jim," she warns.

For people like Jim Wills, in his early seventies, change is hard. To which Luceock replies that for Welsh people

change is synonymous with loss of jobs.

The new emphasis is on families, says Simon Hughes, who has worked at the park for the past 15 years, currently as pool manager. "We've moved on from the days when husbands just used to come down and drink beer until they fell over."

"We also discourage groups of boys and girls because they tend to cause trouble and do damage. Everything now is geared towards the family — the teenagers' disco, the Trecco Bear Club, the family bar. We are changing our image."

Anthony and Daniel, both aged seven, made friends on holiday at Trecco Bay. Anthony likes the rides at Coney Beach; Daniel enjoys "drinking lager with Mum and Dad." Anthony, who has a girlfriend called Cathy back home, is not looking for more female company.

"We've got to grow first," he explains. "You have to be a hundred," adds Daniel. "Then you go for the legs. I kick 'em."

Daniel throws himself backwards off the bar stool. Anthony follows. Then they get up and do it again. And again. Daniel then comes up with the idea of going round collecting glasses and demanding money from customers.

Daniel's mother, Kathleen, and her second husband, David, bought the caravan three weeks ago and claim it is "the best thing we've ever done."

Not everyone is as contented in Trecco Bay. In one block, pan pipe music trails soulfully through the air. Malcolm Ar-

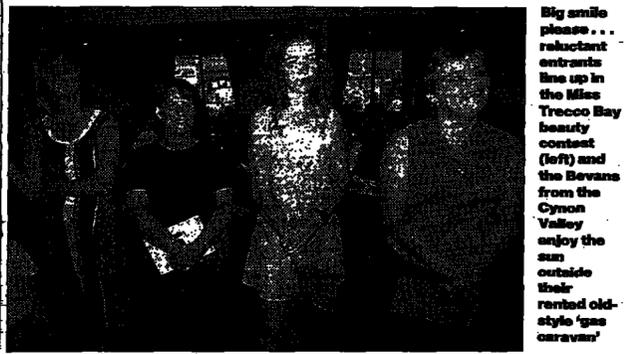
ford turns down the volume and emerges from his caravan with the stick he has had to use since he broke his back 27 years ago.

He bought the van when his 11-year-old daughter was sick with anorexia; she died age 17. Brightly-painted shoes hang around his perfect lawn; his van has stained-glass windows. He hates it and he hates Trecco Bay. "It's the first caravan I've bought and it'll be the last," he said.

"There's no entertainment here and it's too expensive; it would be cheaper to go abroad."

The attempts to wipe out the old Trecco Bay make it a poignant place to be, as lifers in the park struggle both emotionally and financially with the changes. There are still mementoes of the past: there's the fish shop declaring "Probably the best chips in the world"; a plastic dolphin hanging outside a shop; the Miss Trecco Bay contest. But slowly they are being replaced by more expensive alternatives.

I wander back to my luxury caravan, past the new cabaret bar, where a trumpet is playing the dying strains of All Through The Night. "Make a Splash... Trecco Bay for the best fun around!" the brochure had promised. Suddenly I just wanted to cry. Jim is right. Bloody English buggers.



Big smile please... reluctant entrants line up in the Miss Trecco Bay beauty contest (left) and the Evanses from the Cystwys Valley enjoy the sun, seaside and their rented old-style 'gas caravan'

## Why Labour must commit on currency



Martin Kettle

THE MOST intriguing political kite flown in this windless week was a little one, not much noticed against the clear blue sky. It was a story in the Sunday papers that Labour might be scheming to steal a march on the Tories by announcing that they would not take Britain into a European single currency during the next parliament.

I'm still not sure where this present tale of our times came from. Labour denies it: at the highest level, which doesn't necessarily mean it wasn't there. Skilled conspiracy theorists think they can spot a piece of black propaganda from the Tory Eurosceptics, aimed at homing in the Conservatives into a prescriptive strike against a phantom Labour gambit.

Blair seems to have come from, be in no doubt about this; the most important decision which awaits a future Labour government is nevertheless the single currency. All other things in the first Blair term are secondary to it. And the fact remains that Labour, although more pro-European than the Tories and more willing also to set out the conditions under which it might join up, is increasingly

circumspect about its handling of this immense issue. Booting the ball into the long grass of the next parliament would undoubtedly relieve Labour of a great decision. It may even, in time, prove to be the prudent course to take. But it would be wholly unjustifiable to do it now, especially on electorally defensive grounds. Sadly, Labour is too prone to such courses already, which is why last Sunday's story rang so true.

Yet to do it in this case would be the ultimate piece of irresponsibility. It would be doing the wrong thing for the wrong reason.

Nevertheless, it is not hard to see why Tony Blair must sometimes be tempted to postpone the decision. His party is divided about the single currency from the top to the bot-

tom, with at least half-a-dozen shadow ministers, including Robin Cook, whose hearts are not wholly in it or in it at all. The issue has also become a rallying point for the emerging new generation of Labour leftwingers, a distinct and more serious grouping than the older anti-marketisers, and not to be confused with them.

Blair would be only human if he preferred to defer the issue. He is wholly focused on winning the coming election, but he is also a two-term man. He aims to lead for a decade (though don't rule out those "Blair to quit at 50" stories), and he wants to win the second general election almost as badly as the first. Looked at from 1998, the politics of the next decade for Labour seem hard enough already, without inviting a battle royal with the tabloids, the Tories and the Labour left over Europe.

That, however, would be the coward's choice, and Blair has become persuaded, both by his advisers and by his experience, that he must always be a strong leader. In this way of looking at the world, postponement is for wimps. That is why I think he will not

duck the issue if he has to face it.

For face it he must. What is more, he must face it much sooner than many appreciate. Sketch out a chart of the politics of the next decade for yourself, as I tried to do the other day.

It is a useful exercise, because it underlines that the Labour government must make its decision about the single currency within the next 18 months, and much sooner than that in practice.

Here are two propositions about the politics of the next six years. First, any British government which wants to go ahead with joining the single currency on the existing timetable is likely to do so next year, which means, in effect, preparing itself for that decision now.

Second, the next general election but one is likely to take place in 2001, which is also the year in which the second opportunity to join the single currency is most likely to present itself, and it is unlikely that Labour would choose to postpone such an issue at such a time.

The timetable dictates the truth of the first proposition.

Stage three of European monetary union is due to come into effect under the Maastricht treaty at the start of 1999. The political decision to confirm it must be taken early in 1998, when Britain, as it happens, will hold the European presidency. But if Britain does not intend to invoke its own single currency option, it is obliged to declare itself by the start of 1998. In other words, Parliament would probably have to vote in favour of stage three next November.

Thus Labour may have to take the most important strategic decision of its whole term within six months of taking office. It is not impossible.

to imagine Labour escaping without committing itself publicly before the election, because it could always say it was entitled to have a chance to look at the books. But it is impossible to imagine that Blair and his inner core of prospective ministers could operate without a pre-election working assumption or that this would not need to be discussed in Cabinet within a very few weeks of the election.

A different timetable also imposes itself on the second proposition. If Labour misses the bus in 1998, for whatever reasons, it cannot be certain that the opportunity will then again come round at a politically favourable later date of its own choosing.

Assuming that the single currency does actually come into operation in 1999 as planned, but without Britain, it is possible that Britain might then be forced by currency market pressures to join within a short time. That would be politically embarrassing, and might badly affect Labour's performance in the inaugural Scottish and Welsh Assembly elections, as well as the next European elections, all of which are

likely to take place in mid-1999.

Blair will want to avoid such an embarrassment for all those reasons.

If, on the other hand, Britain survives the creation of the single currency but then decides to join from a position of strength rather than weakness, the opportunity to join is expected to come after two years. This, however, would entangle the single currency with the general election, something which a careful party leader like Blair might be anxious to avoid — unless the Conservatives were in such a disarray that there was positive advantage in treating the election as the verdict on the currency, thus obviating the need for a referendum.

But this is very contingent stuff. The truth is that Blair and the shadow cabinet need to make up their minds, and then to go for it. Perhaps they have done so already. Certainly Gordon Brown sounds these days like a Chancellor who wants in not out. With Blair one can never nowadays be sure. But they are going to have to commit themselves soon, and they are going to have to live with their choice for a very long time.

# 16 LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## A disease not a disgrace

**S**IMON Garfield is right to say that the problem with HIV in this country is blame (The re-gaying of Aids, July 18).

Thus the "de-gaying" of HIV was partly because well-meaning people thought that if gay men were associated with HIV, it wouldn't be taken seriously. Justification for this could be drawn from the "re-gaying" of HIV, as characterised in the Government's downgrading of the subject in 1993. The statement which removed special funding from HIV treatment and care said that it was "only" gay men (and perhaps drug users and/or black people) who were affected. So it didn't matter any more.

If the issue is portrayed as gay only, it is not important; but if it is made to seem of general concern, it is a gay conspiracy to talk it up. The danger in all the talk of de-gaying and re-gaying of HIV, which is hardly new, is that it can bring out divisive sentiments in the general population at a time when the needs of all people with HIV are going off the agenda.

What we do not need is divide-and-rule between different groups, backgrounds and experiences, with a hierarchy of guilt and blame. HIV is a disease, not a disgrace.

**A**LTHOUGH there are currently only 161 cases through low-risk routes, this represents 161 more cases than the Daily Mail or Andrew Neil would have us believe is possible. It is a dangerous misrepresentation to imply that this is also the extent of HIV infection. Given the nature of the disease, it is almost certain that this is the tip of the infamous iceberg. What should also be remembered by the straight community is that gay people are often tested regularly; straights are not. This means that the scale of infection only becomes apparent if Aids sets in five to 10 years after contact with the virus.

The figures therefore are already five to 10 years out of date. Although I'm all in

favoured of targeting those who are most at risk, the danger of the current publicity is that it sends a message to the straight community that Aids really is a gay disease, that unprotected sex among straights is safe after all. I hope that the significant, but hidden, good that has been done over the last few years will not now be destroyed by the irresponsible reporting and poor vision displayed by some areas of the press.

Andy Gullbert,  
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London SE26 6LQ.

**P**OSITIVELY WOMEN is the only national HIV organisation providing services to women living with HIV. We take issue with much of Simon Garfield's article. Currently there are about 4,000 women diagnosed with HIV in the UK and a similar number of heterosexual men. Yes, gay men make up 70 per cent of those infected with HIV. However, the other 30 per cent are not an insignificant number. In addition, some of these other groups are increasing in numbers at a faster rate than gay men. To say that "only 161 Aids cases were the result of UK heterosexual transmission with no evidence of high-risk partners" gives a false and potentially dangerous impression. There are thousands of people who belong to "high risk" groups and they do not wear labels on their foreheads. Positively Women constantly encourage women to have regular tests. It is not credible that the police and health officials who were responsible for national policy had enough medical data to know that heterosexuality was not a defence against this virus. Their action then has undoubtedly helped to ensure that the epidemic in the UK has not followed the worldwide pattern.

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## An obelisk out of Africa

**A**LTHOUGH an issue of cultural looting from colonial times, outstanding for half a century, has received coverage in a British newspaper (Pressure grows for Italians to return Ethiopia's pride, July 16), you rightly draw attention to Italy's legal obligations (under Article 37 of its 1947 Peace Treaty with the United Nations) to restore the 2,000-year-old Aksumite obelisk now in Rome. There is, however, an urgent aspect to this matter. The obelisk has now been found to have been suffering from pollution caused by the busy traffic swirling around it over the 60 years since it was

installed in the Piazza di Porta Capena to commemorate the 15th anniversary of Mussolini's march on Rome.

Nor are the problems of transporting the 24-metre-high obelisk back to Ethiopia as formidable or as costly as has been supposed. In a scientific paper published earlier this year, the Italian scientist Dr Vincenzo Francaviglia has concluded that it could easily be rededicated into the five separate pieces into which it had broken centuries before.

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## Millennium Pain



## Go on, read my mind

**D**R CHRIS Winter, of British Telecom's Soul Catcher team, says that "speech and writing are such crude forms of communication" ("From cradle to grave on memory chip, July 18). Crude compared to what?

He would prefer mechanical transfer of neuron pulses from one brain to another. But, as Prof Steven Rose suggests, such fragmentary transfer between separately matured brains couldn't conceivably amount to "my having your experiences", or my having your experiences at all.

Nor is the objective nature of our ordinary (but marvellous) psychological capacities captured by such facile, computer-led analogies. "Playing experiences back to each other" wouldn't be communication between two people but hallucination in one person. I couldn't communicate by inducing holiday experiences in you, any more than I can now by showing you holiday snapshots. Communication starts when I talk about them.

But to propose to produce my own complex, language-based thoughts in you? We have a method for that already: it's called talking, and it's crude or subtle depending on how well it's done. Could neural transfer replace a novel, even a bus-stop chat, except by reinstating language?

In hard scientific reality,

brainwave swaps are no more relevant to interpersonal communication than a kidney transplant, and far less beneficial. Except perhaps to BT. But then who was it said, "It's good to talk"?

John Headwood,  
30 Eastward Avenue,  
Fulford,  
York YO1 4LZ.

**O**BJECTIONS from Ken Hesse and Steven Rose to the idea that we can store experiences on memory chips fail to point out that such a system is impossible, not just improbable. We know enough neuroscience now to be able to prove this statement.

When scientists think of a world where experiences can be recorded on chips, they forget that the brain is a malleable object. A signal which produced a response a few weeks ago might not, indeed will not, produce exactly the same response again the next week: for every signal the brain receives will alter it, perhaps very slightly, but sure enough enough.

Differences between two people are more extreme. On a very basic level, a stimulus one person may find painful, another may find merely irritating. The way the brain develops will have a lot to do with which pathways are reinforced to various forms of stimulus, and to which stimuli and to what extent the brain

responds. The way neural patterns are set up is affected not just by the external environment but also by the physical shape, size and gender of their body. The real problem with storing experiences on chips is that it assumes a mind/body duality which just doesn't exist.

Pat Turner,  
123 Bathurst Gardens,  
London NW10 5JL.

**C**HRIS Winter's views are immoral and unscientific. He sees nothing but good news in the prospect of reproducing and exchanging complete individual memories. Omnisciently, he expresses his enthusiasm by saying: "We have split the atom but the bomb has not yet been built."

And when he says: "Speech and writing are such crude forms of communication", he shows little understanding of neurophysiology. Without speech and writing, the brain cells of memory would be far less connected, that is, far less developed.

Irving Weinman,  
9 Avondale Park Gardens,  
London W11 4PR.

**I**SUGGEST that Chris Winter and colleagues all return forthwith to the extra-galactic laboratory where he was cloned. There, perhaps, he might even read an essay novel, or watch a short play, and study a little human history before returning to play God. (Dr) Duncan Godden,  
61 Russell Street,  
Cambridge CB2 1HT.

**P**ERHAPS Dr Winter would like to add to his list walking, kissing, loving and caring — all communication methods which reveal the extravagance of human life.

If BT are investing £20 million in this dangerous nonsense, perhaps they should tell us why. I would prefer my telephone company to spend its money on research which enhances, rather than replaces, essential forms of human communication — holiday snaps and all.

Mike Lee,  
1 Dean's Yard,  
London SW1P 3NR.

## Flying in the face of facts

**J**AMES Wood mans an otherwise perceptive article (Fearfulness of flying, July 16) when he repeats the familiar old statistic beloved of airline PR people: "One's chances of dying in a car or taxi are 37 times higher, per mile, than one's chances of dying in a plane".

This is a statistic which is simultaneously true and totally irrelevant, since the average distance for a car/taxi journey may, for all we know, be 37 times shorter than the average distance for a plane journey.

A less misleading statistic would compare the average annual number of fatalities per car/taxi journey, with the average annual number of fatalities per plane journey.

David Gear,  
61 Clarendon Road,  
Cheltenham,  
Glos GL53 8DA.

**M**Y partner, who is about to go and work in Central America, took her belongings to a freight company at Gatwick on the day of the TWA crash. Unsupervised, she packed her things into the crate provided. She left no details of her contact address in the UK and could easily have been a false forwarding address. There was no X-ray inspection while she was present. Should there have been anything suspicious in her crate (which was apparently going to travel in the hold of a passenger aircraft), there was no obvious way in which this could have been checked. We were amazed by this.

John Hole,  
158 Old Woolwich Road,  
Greenwich,  
London SE10 9PR.

## Cut off point for child abusers

**T**HE SENTENCING of Howard Hughes for the rape and murder of Sophie Hook (Girl's killer jailed for life, July 19) will bring renewed and prolonged attention to the register of sex offenders at large in the community. A consultative paper was brought out by the Home Office on this subject in mid-June, and awaits responses from interested parties.

However, it seems that some well-defined criteria for assessing whose names go on such a list must be made, otherwise we face the position of including the names of every person who has sexually offended against children and is still alive. Judging from a perusal of Home Office published statistics over the last 50 years, more than 30,000 such persons exist. We have, in effect, a large town — and perhaps a small city — of such individuals at large. Does Michael Howard propose to include them all?

A far more sensible approach would be to include on such a register the names of those who have re-offended against children, plus those whose sexual crimes have involved violence against children. These categories are in the minority, as the proportion of recidivists seems to be nowhere near the practically hysterical levels claimed by some apparent experts. It is true that a large proportion — about a quarter of all offenders — is charged before they are 21 years old; therefore the potential to reoffend can be perhaps assessed at a relatively early stage if the machinery to do so is in place.

But the average age of the "first time" sex offender against children is 38 years, and that of the person set to

become a recidivist about five years higher when first charged. It may be that the exceptions to this, especially the much younger ones, are more likely to become violent re-offenders.

From a study I have just completed, involving six samples totalling about 1,500 offenders, it would seem that there is a 10 per cent chance of an offender against little girls (aged under 13) reoffending, and a higher one of about 15 per cent for an offender against boys of the same age.

Although cases such as that of Hughes engender a great deal of fear, they are most definitely rarities. In fact, last year's total of sexually motivated killings of children was down on the 20-year average of six such crimes.

Stephen J King,  
45 Park View,  
Hurst Street,  
London SE24 0EH.

**O**NCE again in the aftermath of the Sophie Hook case we have a government spokesperson blathering about "a register of paedophiles" as a cure-all for crimes against children.

Once again this death is allowed to happen by the ineffectiveness of the Children Act. There are clear contradictions in the Home Office guidelines compounded by cash limitations on local family courts. The conviction rate of reported cases of child abuse is less than 0.003 per cent, effectively nil.

To produce a register of paedophiles, it is first necessary to identify them. Thalia and Ian Campbell, Glangora, Ynysu, Borth, Dyfed SY2 4SU.

## Tears before shutdown

**I**FND it deeply ironic that John McCarthy (My World Service, July 17) says that he went when, as a hostage, he heard the signature tune of the BBC World Service.

I agree with him, and those opposed to the "reform" of this great institution for international understanding. But the signature tune isn't it Lillibulero, the marching song of King Billy's Protestants at the Battle of the Boyne and still today a song of the Orangemen? Does the World Service team to Ireland think to change the tune, perhaps?

Frank Grace,  
5 Oban Street, Ipswich,  
Suffolk IP1 3PG.

**F**OR heaven's sake, will somebody decide what to do with the spare plinth in Trafalgar Square (Letters, July 17 & passim) before Baroness Thatcher discovers it. Colin Challan,  
1 Main Street,  
East Ardsley,  
Wakefield WF3 2AE.

**I**F the United States believes that the "original" ownership of nationalised Cuban companies has to be re-established, how does this principle apply to dispossessed Native Americans? Jane Turner,  
2 Colenso Road,  
London E5 6SL.

Letters to the Editor may be faxed on 0171 937 4530 or sent by post to 119 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER, and by e-mail to letters@guardian.co.uk. Please include a full postal address and telephone number, even in e-mailed letters.

## Less revolution than reformation of the welfare state

**B**OTH YOUR front page (Libby starts welfare revolution, July 18) and your Leader misrepresented Labour's position on welfare reform.

Your report on the threat of privatisation of child benefit administration includes a quote from me that was taken out of context from a lecture I gave three months ago and was unrelated to the matter in hand. In fact, I am opposed to this privatisation. The administration of child benefit is efficient at present, and it is folly for the Government to change it for dogmatic reasons.

Your leading article berates us for other supposed errors, yet fails to acknowledge the whole picture. We cannot, in advance of an election, give a specific commitment to a particular formula or figure in relation to increases in the basic state pension. We simply do not know at this stage what the condition of the public finances will be. What we have said, however, is that we have an overarching principle: that all pensioners should share fairly in rising national prosperity, and that the basic pension should play its part in meeting that objective.

We are not "ducking the challenge" of inequality. Indeed, we have highlighted both the growth in inequality and the spread of poverty since 1978, and we will work to reverse both, in government. It won't happen, however, with the privatising agenda now revealed as the Tory fifth-term priority. Modernising and strengthening the welfare state, maintaining the principle of social insurance, and helping people to move from benefit to work: these are the key elements of policy. I hope we will have the Guardian's support in these aims.

Chris Smith MP,  
Shadow Social Security Secretary,  
House of Commons,  
London SW1A 0AA.

**N**OT for the first time Blair Naidas are mystified that they are being quoted by your

political staff (Blair is urged to honour poll result, July 18). I think your readers would be entitled to assume that any Blair aide quoted by the Guardian worked in Mr Blair's office. Since no such aide said that Tony Blair was "free to do as he liked" with the Shadow Cabinet team elected by the Parliamentary Labour Party, you should be clearer about the origin of your quotes. I would be grateful in future that when anonymous aides are used in support of a story, the Guardian could make it clear they are not the "aides" normally assumed to be speaking on behalf of Mr Blair, namely me or any of my staff, whom you are entitled to label as Blair spokesmen or spokeswoman.

Alastair Campbell,  
Press secretary to  
Mr Hon Tony Blair MP,  
House of Commons,  
London SW1A 0AA.

**I**T IS apparent that if the Labour Party is not elected at the next General Election, Britain will become the last bastion of rightwing government. Peter Lilley is planning the privatisation of child benefit and this is either a dry run for the wholesale sell-off of the welfare state, or the last rites of Thatcherism.

I believe that the welfare state should cater for all of society but the problem is financing it. I do not advocate tax hikes, and private insurance is too costly for most people; so the question, as ever, is how the welfare state should play and what level of benefits is adequate for a modern society.

Privatisation is not the answer to the ills of the welfare state. The only constructive solution is to create more employment so that people are taken off benefits, and more taxes are collected. This will cut the £78 billion social-security bill and release more money for the people who have to rely on benefits.

Kevin French,  
48 Gloucester Court,  
Plymouth PL1 5EJ.

## A Country Diary

**L**LANFROTHERN: Looking out across the brilliant green sward from the sunlit slopes near Lanfrotthern the other day it was hard to imagine that 200 years ago ships could sail right up to the old stone bridge at Aberllynor. Many wooden ships were built here, where oak, holly, ash and sycamore came trooping down to the tide-line. Now the Glaslyn meanders on between rusty banks towards the great embankment that caused most of this change.

Sir Clough Williams Ellis regretted the reclaiming of the estuary. Traeth Mawr, that was a major feature of the view from Plas Brondanw, his ancestral home, situated in my favourite Welsh garden. Writing in 1969 he recounts how there'd been talk of drainage as early as 1625 but it was his 18th-century ancestors who initiated "this dubious business of Sen Banks." The completion by William Maddox of Porthmadog's embankment in 1816 "transformed this lovely island-studded inlet into so many thousand acres of third-rate pasture."

ROGER REDFERN.

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Strain in the  
Colin Parry  
personality  
his son Tim  
Warrington  
has his own  
interview by  
DINA RABIN

The yes  
As MPs slip off to  
with a big pay rise  
bemoans the rise



555 من المجلد

# Strange kind of comfort found in the celebrity circus

## Colin Parry became a media personality overnight when his son Tim was killed in the Warrington bomb. Now he has his own TV show. Interview by DINA RABINOVITCH

COLIN PARRY mourned his son in public. Remember Tim, the 12-year-old killed by the IRA in Warrington? He was buried with full Everton strip, including the shorts he'd been out to buy the day the bomb exploded in his local shopping centre. His granddad supported Everton, his dad supported Everton, and so did Tim.

Colin wanted Tim to become a symbol for peace, so he went on a television news bulletin to plead that his death not be a waste. Colin and his wife Wendy went to Ireland to make a programme for Panorama. They wrote a book about Tim called An Ordinary Boy. Colin impressed: he was dignified, a believer in forgiveness, a man people remember.

For Colin, the media exposure became interwoven with his grieving, and has become a part of his recovery. This, I suppose, is where one becomes uneasy about what business the spotlight has here.

"If you were to talk to any bereaved parent," says Colin, "the terror for them is that people close to them get worn out and fatigued by continuously talking about the child who's gone. Close family and friends carry the whole burden and they can't take it indefinitely, so there's a danger you'll lose them too, you'll drive them away through your grief being too sharp."

"So if you've suddenly got another window through which you can channel your grief and comments, which we found we had because it was a political killing, well that was an amazingly powerful outlet for us, especially for me."

Colin says "the greatest therapy is the therapy of talking. That is the difference between madness and sanity following a child's death. For me the media provided that outlet, for a long, long time."

At the time, Wendy hadn't wanted any of the publicity. She would have battered down the hatches, shut the door on reporters. But Wendy let the media trample through her sunny, cared-for house, because she could see it was helping Colin.

And now the beast has come to stay. Colin Parry is to host his own talk-show, for Granada Television. He will be interviewing others who have been thrust, unwonted, into the public eye. Diana Lamplugh, mother of Suzy, the estate agent who disappeared; Julie Ward, whose daughter John was killed in Kenya; and survivors of the IRA's bomb in Manchester, among others.

Does he feel uncomfortable with the idea of having found a new fulfilment in life — that is what he readily admits it is — as a result of his son's death? "Oh yeah, yeah, I'm wide open to that criticism."

how the barrage of media exposure became "addictive" for him. "For me," she says, "it's keeping busy which helps; for Colin it's talking about it, talking publicly."

And Colin says: "For about two years I had an awful lot of exposure to the media — as had Wendy, though Wendy will admit it didn't affect her in the same way — television, radio, press, and I got an awful lot out of that."

"We were suddenly exposed to a whole new world, of politics and big issues. It felt like there was a role emerging for me as an English father, who was not party political, who was not religious, suddenly cast in the middle of this ancient conflict. There were people prepared to listen to me saying, 'What would you do about it, and that was both flattering and felt very worthwhile'."

When the media attention died down, after about two years, Colin felt uneasy. He went to see a contact he'd made through writing his book about Tim, the hot-shot London agent Mark Lucas, who handles the likes of Carol Thatcher and the former Beirut hostage John McCarthy.

"I said to Mark, 'Look I'm betwixt and between. I don't really know what I should do with the rest of my life. I'm often frustrated and unsettled.' We chatted, and I found his advice very good and objective, and then he introduced the idea of programme-making on television."

"We talked about types of programmes, and I said I was interested in the people who'd been burned, not literally, but burned by life. How their experience had left them deeply scarred but nonetheless still capable of human beings, and indeed in some cases able to go out and take the message to others."

And Mark said, "Yes, I think that would make a decent television programme..."

Last month Colin and Wendy went to a gathering of Compassionate Friends, the organisation for bereaved parents. It was their first time.

"We'd deliberately not joined because it was the sort of thing we never wanted to get involved with," says Wendy. "We actually knew a couple who'd lost all their friends, apart from friends who'd also suffered bereavement — parents who hadn't been through what they had come to seem irrelevant to them. We just felt we wanted to keep the friends we'd already got, and try as best we can to lead as normal lives as possible."

Though they still won't be joining Compassionate Friends, they both found the meeting helpful. "We met people there who could quite freely talk about their children who had died, who, like us, probably spend most of the rest of the year never talking about it — because your chances to do so are fewer and fewer as time goes by."

"I know even now when I mention Tim on the odd occasion," says Wendy, "I can immediately see the look on the other person's face, the thought, 'Oh, how do I deal with this. I wish she hadn't mentioned him.'"



Loss and gain... in the wake of his son's death, Colin Parry's role as a peacemaker gave his life the purpose he badly needed

## Russia imports the language of politicheskaya korrektnost

### DAVID HEARST on how Moscow is reeling from a verbal invasion

I DID not need a dictionary for my first brush with Russian authorities. I was trying to navigate Moscow's unfathomably obscure road system, where drivers have to perform complicated manoeuvres should they be so foolhardy as to want to turn left.

Cars with foreign number plates were a lucrative source of income for a small army of traffic police — "Strazh" (fine) he said. This was not Russian but German. When I got out my roubles, the wolf shook his head: "Baksy" (bucks or dollars). "Bon voyage," he said waving me on my way, \$20 lighter.

As I later discovered, all these foreign words were in common Russian usage, the relics of waves of invasions of language dating back from Peter the Great. That great shipbuilder imported Dutch naval vocabulary as well as German military (off-terms). To this day, the private guard will raise the "schlagbaum" (barrier) on the gates of the foreign compound every time we drive out.

Catherine the Great brought in hundreds of Italian architects in the second half of the 18th century to adorn Russian buildings with "cupoli" (cupolas). French nobles arrived in their thousands after the 1789 revolution and until well into the 19th century it was "de rigueur" for every Russian of noble blood to be educated by a French governor.

The French language spread like weeds over a culturally barren Russia. In a good household, Russian was the language to be spoken only to the servants, while it became simply "movaiseton" (manvais ton or bad taste) to speak anything other than French to your social equals.

Even Alexander Pushkin, that great defender of the Russian language, wrote most of his letters in French. As Pushkin's great friend Alexander Griboyedov observed, the language spoken by the Russian nobility was a frightful mixture of French and Lower Novgorod. Russia's revolutionaries were no better at preserving their language, casting its peasant notions aside for such great concepts as "revolut-

sia", "socialism" and "seditionism". So it should really come as little surprise to learn that when Boris Yeltsin once again opened Russia's doors and windows to western influence in 1991, some 10,000 English words flew in. The latest edition of the Concise Oxford Russian Dictionary contains such gems as "politicheskaya korrektnost" (political correctness) of which there is none, "golftst" (golfer) and "sketbord" (skateboard) of which there are some, and "raketer" of which there are many.

The bewildered linguists of the Institute of Russian Language are trying to stem the flood of English words. English has been a real predator of Russian culture, sweeping in on the back of the free market. One "new" Russian can now say to another: "poyedem keshino, na lunch, tam kharkoshes security" (let us go to the bar for lunch, its got good security guards there). You have "dilera" (dealers) who trade in "futureznaya sledka" (futures) and stash their ill-gotten gains in "off-shornaya kompaniya" (off-shore companies).

Now that the Russian welfare state is disappearing, it is good taste for the new Russian rich to dabble in charity, becoming "sponsori". The word "sponsori" has become so powerful in Russia that it has quickly spawned other meanings. "Who is the sponsor of this girl?" one friend asked at a party, meaning has she got a rich boyfriend.

The womenfolk of the new rich are heavily into "shaping" of the Jane Fonda variety, while their men occupy themselves with "bodybuilding". The new Russian family will buy "tosteri" (toasters) "mexeri" (mixers) and "amplifieri" (amplifiers) and load them all into the "vuzovskiy" (literally off-road Jeep).

And so on. Ad nauseum. Pushkin at least was literate in making his excuses. He tried to describe how his randy hero Eugene Onegin was dressed but gave up saying: "But pantaloni, frak and gilet, all these words don't exist in Russian." As they chew their "trigliz spetsyemint, double djuce end doublemint", today's new Russian high-fliers are somewhat less elegant in their abandonment of their native culture. As Yelena Bonner, the wife of Andrei Sakharov and an eternal dissident, once said: "Democracy? It's more like democracy (shitocracy).

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# The yes-men and fops shall inherit the earth

## As MPs slip off to their Umbrian villas for the summer - with a big pay rise under their belts - SIMON HOGGART bemoans the rise and rise of the Commons crawlers

ONE can imagine the scene. It is the year 2015, and the prime minister, Ms Mautreen Mowlam, is appearing in a party political broadcast, shown simultaneously on 144 channels thanks to the tough conditions Tony Blair demanded when he awarded 98 of them to Anna Murdoch. "You know," she says, "we're aware a lot of you say that after 18 years of your government it's time to give government a rest. We're British, and we think it's only fair to let everyone have a chance. "We in the Labour Party can understand that. But before you decide, I ask you to spend a few moments thinking about a time not so long ago. Most of you who will vote for the first time on Thursday are too young to remember The Summer of Discontent. "It was a dark time for our country. Crying children asked their parents why there were no birthday cards. The reason was that the postmen were all on strike. "Our capital city, people could not get to work because

hoping this is the last time they will not need to leave their phone number with the ministerial switchboard. But the election is now promised for spring. However, Mr Major's majority falls, and however unhappy he makes Ullster MPs, the minority parties will always secretly favour a struggling government permanently within inches of defeat to a new administration with a healthy majority. Blackmail is an ugly word, but there it is. That gives



Labour members eight or nine months to ponder a greater problem. The pay rise they voted themselves last week was, some of us think, perfectly fair. They had fallen behind inflation, yet inflation is a poor guide since the national standard of living has risen considerably over the past 17 years, even if less than other European countries and much less than the Far East. (Ministers privately concede that the reason the Koreans are investing so heavily here is only partly to do with "enterprise centre of Europe", more about a docile workforce which is paid less than its equivalent in Korea).

The argument that some MPs are venal, lazy and not worth paying at all is unfair too. If you, with great difficulty, got a job you'd always wanted, how would you feel if the new boss told you that because some of your colleagues were incompetent and slothful, your pay would be half the going rate? Still, there is no doubt that the rise went down very badly with the public — not least because of the new freeze on public sector pay. MPs have claimed for ages now that it's vital they should get a proper salary to help them remain independent. Yet Parliament has never

18 ARTS

HUGO DAVENPORT reveals why 73-year-old marvel Stan Lee and his string of comic-book superheroes are back in fashion



Spiderman and Stan Lee... 'I never knew what people wanted — to this day I don't know what people want,' says Lee

Spiderman meets his maker

IN THE words of the song, we don't need another hero — or not while Stanley Martin Lieber is around, anyway. At 73, the man better known as Stan Lee, chairman of Marvel Comics, creator of the Fantastic Four, The Incredible Hulk, The Mighty Thor, Spiderman, Iron Man, The Avengers, The X-Men, is still going strong. And so are his comic book characters.

Perhaps we shouldn't be surprised that the denizens of the Marvel Universe, hatched in a blaze of phenomenal energy more than three decades ago, have gone the distance. So much of Hollywood's recent live-action output aspires to the condition of the comic book: animation is on a roll. Inevitably, superheroes with a track record are in demand. Batman and Superman, from a different publishing pedigree, have both had a clutch of big-budget outings at the cinema. Now Lee's characters are up for the treatment. Just launched: a quartet of animated videos featuring Spiderman, Iron Man and the Fantastic Four, released under the catch-all "Action Heroes" by the Disney offshoot Buena

Vista and New World Entertainment, owner of Marvel Films. These Marvel diehards are joined by a new team, the Garveys, transplanted from First Century Scotland to contemporary New York. Live action movies are also in prospect: a Spiderman feature in collaboration with Terminator director James Cameron, there are plans for The Fantastic Four and The X-Men.

The delight of devotees may, of course, be tempered by the knowledge that there is nothing unprecedented in this. Captain America's cinematic debut was a movie serial in 1944. Three cheapish Spiderman pictures were made virtually back-to-back during the late seventies, while Lou Ferrigno played The Incredible Hulk in a TV pilot which eventually ran to 80 episodes. Though cynics may dismiss the latest developments as the application of a typical nineties commercial milking machine to fantasy characters of proven longevity, it is more difficult to entertain such doubts of Lee himself. His enthusiasm for the Marvel Universe appears undimmed. "I never knew what people

wanted — to this day I don't know what people want," he says disarmingly. "You've got to write what you would like to read. So maybe I'm a teenager at heart!"

At heart, he remains a story man. "Take a movie like Twister. The plot was almost incidental. It's the same with some of today's comic books — some don't have much story; it's all just pictures. I can't help but feel that sooner or later they'll get back to concentrating on the story. Anything that isn't based on a solid foundation doesn't last."

It is sometimes argued that Lee and others like him were not just constructing an American art form, but fabricating a mythology for a young country from the wonders and terrors of 20th century science. This notion contains a paradox. A mythology implies a sort of timelessness; and yet, as a commercial venture in a cut-throat marketplace, the comics industry had to be acutely sensitive to national mood swings.

Sub-Mariner hatched the Nazis; in the cold war, Captain America got stuck into the comics. "The papers in America led me to believe the communists were the bad guys. So when we were looking for villains, after we got finished with the Nazis, we'd make our villains communists. After a while I got a little more sophisticated. I still think the Nazis were bad guys, always will, but I decided to lay off the communists."

By the sixties, The Mighty Thor was lecturing hippies on the futility of dropping out. Lee never had much time for the counterculture, and certainly not for drugs, although he remains proud of the tolerance displayed by the multi-racial platoon of Sgt Fury and His Howling Commandos.

The Brooklyn-born writer began working more than half a century ago for the company that was to become Marvel Comics. It was in the year before the US entered the second world war. He was his writer's spurs on Captain America; by 1942, he had become editor. He was just 18, a live-wire who perched on filing cabinets playing the ocarina during breaks. Since that epoch, he has filled the roles of art director, editor-in-chief and publisher, moving to the West Coast in 1981 to supervise an anima-

tion studio which expanded eight years later into a full-blown Marvel Film division. "For the first 20 years or so, I was just doing average work which my publisher wanted because he felt that comic books were for young children. He didn't want me to dwell too much on characterisation, on dialogue, or on continuing stories, because he felt that youngsters couldn't remember from month to month where we had left off."

"Later I wondered whether comics couldn't bring in an older audience. That's when I started doing the Fantastic Four and, luckily, it seemed to work. In the early years most of the letters we received were in crayon or pencil, then they were typed, later they would have return addresses from colleges or universities."

In the sixties, Lee was credited with the introduction of the typical Marvel "flawed hero", but this was not a conscious aim. It was more a question of taking a single fantasy element — a superpower — and trying to make every other aspect of a character's existence as realistic as possible. Thus Peter Parker, alias Spiderman, was afflicted with

anything from dandruff to money troubles. He also had a gift for judicious reinvention. When he brought back one of the early heroes, The Human Torch, who, aside from an abortive spurt, had lain dormant through the fifties, he made him into Johnny Storm of the Fantastic Four. And when Captain America was re-uscitated, the hero himself was made uncomfortably aware of being an anachronism. Ultimately, however, the reason why Lee's creations stand a good chance of carrying on into the next millennium has little to do with such topical opportunism. Lee himself believes it is because people have an inborn desire for heroes, and he keeps his ethics straight-arrow. "I believe in one simple thing, and I think that if everyone tried to carry this out and live according to its tenets, we'd have a pretty perfect world. And that is — do unto others."

So there you have it — the Gospel according to St Stan. Serviceable enough for ordinary human beings and in Lee's world, no less fit for a superhero.

LECTURE

Dalai Lama Megatropolis, London

MEGATROPOLIS claims to be a lifestyle rather than just a club. While it remains best known for pioneering Goa Trance — essentially techno — its Thursday night residency offers face painting, palm readings, shiatsu massages and information on the latest road protests alongside the usual dance floor mayhem. Allen Ginsberg has spoken there, Timothy Leary's dying Internet messages were followed with reverence in the main bar, and on Thursday afternoon megatropolis was opened for that most unlikely of fellow travellers, his Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Actually, the Dalai Lama didn't enter Megatropolis's dark interior. Instead, his speech from the Barbian centre was to be broadcast live here via a video-screen link-up. The motley crew — mainly casual chubbers with a smattering of office workers and furtsomings — reflected the hold Eastern mysticism has on the young and restless. In India, after the Goa party season finishes, it's now a prospect to head North to the Tibetan settlement of Daran Sala. Meeting the Dalai Lama and learning Tantric law has replaced Kashmir's houseboats as the ultimate off-season sanctuary.

Entering a nightclub on a perfect summer afternoon gives a twist to the term chill

out. Megatropolis had done its best to maintain a meditative atmosphere with cushions covering the dance floor, incense burning, ambient music playing and information on the Tibetan situation available. Later in the evening the same venue would pulse to hard, electronic rhythm while revellers imbibed a variety of contemporary chemicals. Yet an air of tranquillity covered the afternoon's event. Softly, softly rather than techno terrorism. Transforming a nightclub into a temple is no mean feat. The music stopped around 1.30 am and a lecture on Buddhism was delivered by a disciple. Initially intended to last half an hour the failure of the video link-up to connect at 2pm left our lecturer rambling beyond the call of duty.

Finally, around 3pm it was announced that the link-up would begin. But only orally. With just a black and white mug-shot of His Holiness to stare at, around half of the 100 strong audience left. The rest of us tried to follow the four noble truths, a teaching at the heart of Buddhism.

Megatropolis's huge sound system is not designed for the subtleties of the human voice, especially one that is speaking Tibetan and is translated into English. Straining to hear I picked up tips on meditation practice before having the insight that London sunshine was where I would find most peace of mind. Enlightenment, as His Holiness has suggested, comes in many different ways.

Garth Cartwright

OPERA

La Traviata Covent Garden piazza

HALF an hour before the live relay of La Traviata, Terry Edwards, director of the Royal Opera Chorus, and four opulently costumed chorists, led a sing-along. After three: 'Ah, si go / diam-o go... The late arriver, clapping on on a stage replete with 3D divas, would have been forgiven for thinking how lifelike this video link-up was.

Covent Garden's piazza was crammed. Some scaled railings for a better view, a lucky few looked on from the balcony of Café Gerard, the open-air equivalent of the royal box. The boys in blue were out in force, giving the event the breezy charm of a Millwall match; swarthy stewards marshalled the hordes this way and that. With difficulty — and some pleasure — one could imagine such a presence within the hallowed House itself. "Sorry Mrs Bottomley, you can't stand there"; "Move on please, Lord Healey". To assist the authorities, crash-barriers bannied the fans back from the celluloid sopranos. A wise precaution: there's nothing more likely to turn peaceable picnickers to violence than a sensitive rendition of Dita alla giovine.

This was a unique social event: a few too many cans of Hofmeister to be Glyndebourne; one or two more bottles of Moët Chandon than you'd find at Westminster Dogs. There was much to divert the attention, not least the stream of passers-by cutting across the audience — like being in a theatre where 60-odd people go to the toilet every minute. But this lot were devouring crumbs from the rich man's table, and wouldn't be distracted. Sure enough, it was beautifully filmed; and if it didn't sound quite like it would in the grand tier, there were few here who cared. When Roberto Alagna launched into the advertisers' favourite, Libiamo ne lieti calici, the appreciative throng even clapped. They'll be throwing flowers at the screen next.

Brian Logan

File under x for extremely silly

Television

Stuart Jeffries

TOMORROW'S World has always been good, but we can make it better. We have the technology. Or at least we have a nip TV actress at a loose end between series. We can graft her on to the show. A nip here, a tuck there. You know, doctor, it might just work.

Gillian Anderson's collaboration with the Tomorrow's World team in Future Fantastic (BBC1) isn't so much a revolution in science programming as cosmetic surgery.

The result is a confusing duplication of narrators. Some hink of camera explains the developments in bionic research or genetics, then cut to Anderson to draw the moral. Like an epilogue in 'The Street' of San Francisco but with less substance.

"Even though science fic-

tion has warned us against meddling with nature, the signs are that we are going to do it anyway — and sooner than you think," said Anderson by way of a supposedly biting conclusion to this instalment, entitled The Brave New Body.

But hadn't she been watching the rest of the programme? Perhaps her script guys and the BBC's script guys should have done breakfast and thrashed out something coherent. We had already been meddling with nature. Genetic engineer Dr Walter Geltrio of Basel University had isolated a control gene that enabled him to induce extra eyes for flies — on their legs and wings. But, as these eyes were not wired into the flies' brains, they were about as useful as Anderson's commentary.

What was interesting was the choreography of the celebrity. Anderson did not appear as herself, but in full paramour investigator regalia — sensible FBI trouser suit, slight heels, pernickety atten-

tion to grooming. The camera moved around Anderson and she swivelled in time, her eyes always on the viewer, like a mobile Lord Kitchener. It was as uncannily as anything in The X Files: they had beamed Dana Scully on board without any noticeable change to her molecular structure, or demeanor. Her cheeks were as sucked in, her stare as high-school serious as if she was pouring scorn on one of Mulder's looney-tune delusions. Even her script was as potty as to have been written by Chris Carter.

The real stars of the show were the cyborg wannabes: individuals who longed to go under the knife in order to have eyes in the back of their heads or to have sockets where they could plug in extra sensitive arms. If they had their way, they would look like spiders, but would be socially useful as all-seeing, mobile bat stands or mug trees or unbeatable goalkeepers. Now that's what I call progress.

The only problem with such

advanced prosthetics is the risk of infection. But that could be overcome by the invention of genetic engineering: if flies can have eyes we can grow limbs in the most unexpected places. Typically, science hasn't kept pace with the waiting lists of those who want seeking surgery in order to become superhuman. But this week's news that a computer chip can be implanted on to the retina to give blind people artificial vision, also gave hope to others that similar chips could also stimulate ultra-violet sight. Carrots may help you to see in the dark, but a bit of silicon surgically inserted through a slit in the back of your eye is much more effective.

After this disturbing dreaming, it was relatively pleasant to be brought down to earth by Seattle etiquette in Fraser (C4). What should caring nephews do with the ashes of a hated aunt? "Winter's coming. The sidewalks are always slippery..."

Sitcom that's in a class of its own

Radio

Anne Karpf

AN ANTHROPOLOGIST visiting Britain would have no difficulty categorising the different genus of families: there'd be the middle class, the working class, and one in a class of its own — the families in Radio 4 sitcoms.

I fell to pondering the nature of this strange species when listening to the first episode of a new Radio 4 sitcom, Minor Adjustment, about a family with a three-year-old Down's Syndrome child. Amy, Eric and Andy Merriman (the former the author of Beyond Our Ken, the latter his son and father of a Down's Syndrome girl) who plays Amy) clearly haven't set out to write anything as bleak and moribund as Peter Nichols' 1967 A Day in the Death of Joe Egg — nutres temps, nutres diebus — and indeed, are

commendably showing a family where the disability isn't the main character. Amy herself scarcely figured in this opener (nor did her condition seem to impinge on their lives) — more central was her older sister Kate's attempt to save the ageing local Lollipop man from redundancy.

What was chiefly surprising was the family itself — as unfused a quartet as you're likely to meet, who never swear or talk over each other, experience no agony and certainly no Ecstasy. The most dissonant air is provided by the moribund father, a newspaper columnist, given to mild expressions of irritation that the world isn't exactly to his liking. Otherwise, they're pasty, wise-cracking, socially concerned to a person. It could be because Mum is a shrink. Or maybe it's because the authors have given the characters (mildly amusing) lines that they wanted to write rather than words they might reasonably be expected to utter (hence the Lollipop Man, revealing that he worked pre-

viously for the Post Office, quips "a man of letters, you might say"). Or perhaps it's because they inhabit a Radio 4 sitcom, where the world remains an irredeemably cosy (and oh so slow) place.

Gill Adams's ambitious play Last Bus Home, the third in Radio 4's Five In July series, spirited us to the different milieu of cussed, working-class, Hull teenage girls, whose baiting exterior masks a grave anxiety about themselves and the world into which they're growing. Attempting to honour the memory of a raucous, near-delinquent fellow pupil, Sally, a group of them embark furtively on a futile New Year's Eve pub crawl to collect money to buy her a carved angel headstone. Forced to come to terms with a Sally neither angelic nor a "slag", they remorsefully acknowledge their own past indifference towards her. Adams depicts girls at the formative, sexually burgeoning stage of adolescence, when the death of their friend makes male sexuality extra-menacing. The play astutely exhibits

the limited range of options (and argot) available to young women, and in a triumphant finale has them literally muddying the divide between "good" and "bad" girls as they smear a church with faeces.

Nothing wrong with its content, but it was Adams's techniques which often made this play hard to listen to. For the first two-thirds she played mayhem with chronology, so shifting between past and present that you could never surrender to the drift of narrative but were constantly having to work at the plot. What's more, director Kate Rowland cast players with such similar voices that for a long time they seemed like a generic category of individuals. In fact until the last third, the location recording was a more powerful presence than the characterization, which suffered from a certain relentlessness of tone. In this, her second radio play, Adams demonstrates that she is rich in ideas, but could do with the services of a rigorous script editor.

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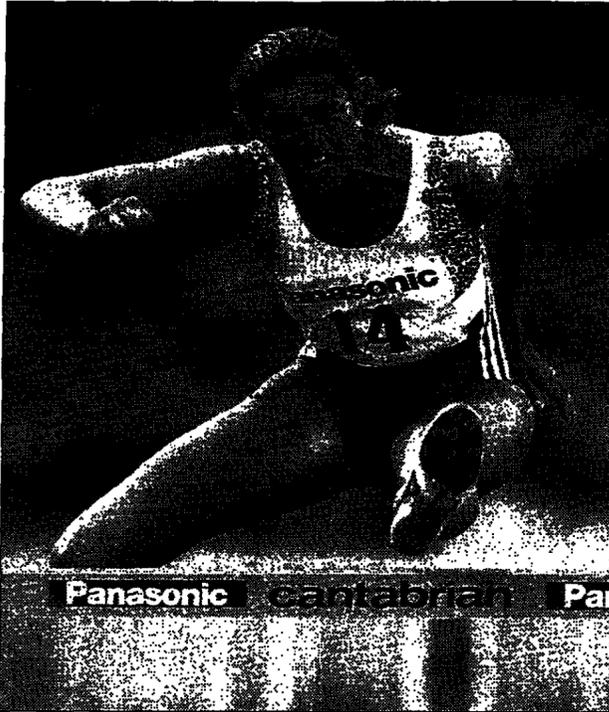




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# Money Guardian

Anyone who takes part in sport faces the threat not only of injury but litigation too. Rachel Baird looks at the cover on offer



Just like money from home

Paul Stado

**EMPOVERISHED** students and stranded holiday-makers will soon be able to get emergency cash wired to them immediately via a new Thomas Cook money transmission service. The service, available in 80 countries, takes just 10 minutes to send cash to the 20,000 international bureaux used by MoneyGram, a US-based money transmission company which handled \$2 billion worth of transfers last year. And by the end of this year it will be possible to collect cash from 600 Thomas Cook outlets worldwide. The system is up and running in its branches in Germany, France, the Netherlands, Belgium, North America, Canada and Egypt. Senders, at their local Thomas Cook branch, transmit money via the system using a cheque, credit card or cash, and are given a reference number which the receiver needs to collect the funds at the other end. The service also offers a free message of up to 10 words — "This is all you're getting," perhaps. Once the money is in the system it can be collected at any MoneyGram outlet. The receiver must present a photo ID, such as a passport, and quote the reference number to collect the cash in the local currency. The receiver does not need to have a bank account in the country to which the money is being sent. For added security the sender can stipulate that the receiver gives an extra piece of information, such as a relative's birthday, before receiving the cash. MoneyGram believes the system will be used mainly by workers from developing countries working in the West. According to Geneva's International Labour Office, such payments came to more than \$71 billion in 1990. Other likely users are stranded tourists — research shows that about 50 per cent of holidaymakers spend more than they had planned — and student travellers seeking emergency cash from Mum and Dad. Charges for MoneyGram transfers start at \$20 (about £13) for sums of up to \$400 (about £250). The maximum which can be sent is \$7,500 (about \$4,800), the charge for which would be \$250 (about £160). All charges are paid by the sender.

No pain, no gain... even Olympic gold medalists such as Linford Christie and Sally Gunnell have been laid low by injury

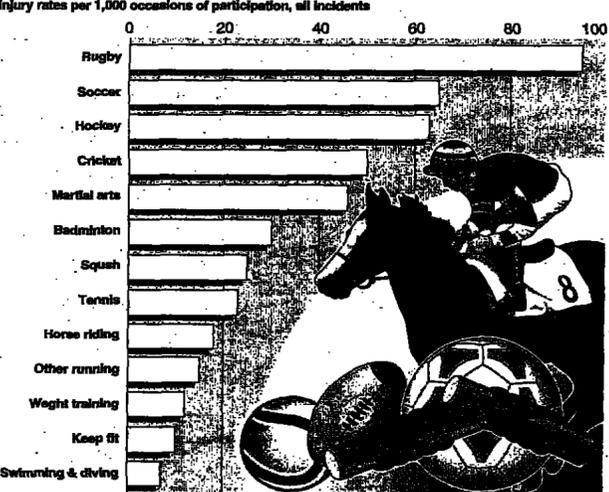
## Where athletes run the risk

**A**S THE Olympic Games get under way in Atlanta today athletes face temperatures so high there are fears for their health. Away from the world stage the less accomplished face dangers of their own. Everyone who takes part in sport runs a risk and should consider getting appropriate insurance cover. A Sports Council study in 1991 found that there were 19 million sports injuries in England and Wales over the year, resulting in 6.4 million people needing treatment for their injuries. About 1.4 million sports injuries caused people to take time off work for an average of six days. Some sporting activities are much riskier than others. The Sports Council study found that rugby was three times as likely to result in serious injury as the next riskiest ac-

tivities, which are soccer, cricket, hockey and martial arts. And the survey excluded some activities insurers regard as most dangerous — including paragliding, ballooning and potholing. But if you are hurt insurance can provide cash, or access to free medical treatment. Before taking out new policies, however, people should check what existing insurance cover they already

people who may be injured in an accident, including amateur sporting accidents, according to the Association of British Insurers. Direct Line and Sun Alliance Connections, for example, provide £1 million of third-party liability insurance as standard under their contents policies. There is a growing tendency for people to sue those who injure them on the sports field. The rugby world witnessed this earlier in 1996 when Ben Smolton successfully sued the referee of a match during which he broke his neck. Fortunately for the referee, the Scottish Rugby Union's insurers paid the damages to Mr Smolton: not every amateur sportsman will be so lucky. Insurers and brokers stress that people should always check what they are covered for, so do not assume your household policy covers you for liability during sports. Contents policies may also cover sports equipment outside their home. The "all risks" section of General Accident's contents policy, for example, covers sports equipment anywhere in the UK, but only when it is not in use. To insure against the risk of being injured while playing sport, an existing personal accident policy may be adequate, but many policies exclude injuries during sports seen as particularly hazardous. Norwich Union's Family Plus policy will not pay out for injuries sustained during

### Sporting injuries



horse racing or mountaineering. Sun Alliance Connections' personal accident extension to its household policy excludes skiing, while General Accident charges more for its Income Protector policy if you want cover when playing rugby or football. For the sports that personal accident policies do cover, they typically pay out lump sums if the policyholder is

killed or loses a limb or the sight of an eye. They also pay out regular benefits for a limited period if the policyholder is permanently and totally disabled. Medical insurance policies also help with sports injuries. BUPA's three main medical policies all cover sports injuries, although the amount of physiotherapy available depends on what you pay for the

policy. No sports are excluded. BUPA's Fast-lane policy was designed for active, younger people and pays only for outpatient or day-care treatment, and overseas accident and emergency costs of up to £10,000. It excludes treatment for injuries sustained during what it considers dangerous activities such as ice hockey, hunting on horseback and

martial arts. Only a minority of people have personal accident and medical insurance, however, and for those who want insurance only for sports accidents personal accident and medical policies are expensive.

The best option for this insurance may be via a national sports association or club. These can buy insurance for members in bulk, and an Association of British Insurers spokesman said that sports associations often offer cover at very preferential rates.

Some clubs within the British Athletics Federation, for example, buy accident insurance for all their members, covering them for injury or death while at meetings organised by the Federation. The cost works out at around £2 per club member per year.

But insurance brokers who specialise in sports insurance policies point out that clubs' insurance policies may not cover members outside organised training and events. Both AmSport and Sportscover Direct cover a wide range of activities including skiing, rugby, ice hockey and martial arts.

AmSport's Gameplan policy, for example, offers insurance for rugby players (including physiotherapy fees up to £150, personal liability, accidental death and permanent total disablement benefits). For further information: Sportscover Direct, tel 0117-922-6222; AmSport, tel 0117-922-2555; Golfplan Insurance, tel 0117-922-6222; British Athletics Federation, tel 0121-440-5000.

Money Guardian is edited by Margaret Hughes

### Cash dash

Time and cost to send £750 from London to Jamaica.

Time	Cost
Midland	4 days £12
NatWest	4-5 days £12
Lloyds Bank	3-5 days £13
Halifax	3-5 days £17
Midland	3 days £17
NatWest	2 days £18
Lloyds Bank	2-3 days £19
Barclays	3 days £20
Abbey Nat	5 days £25
Barclays	2 days £25
MoneyGram	10 mins £39
Western Un*	10 mins £42

\* Available through Post Office. Source: Thomas Cook.

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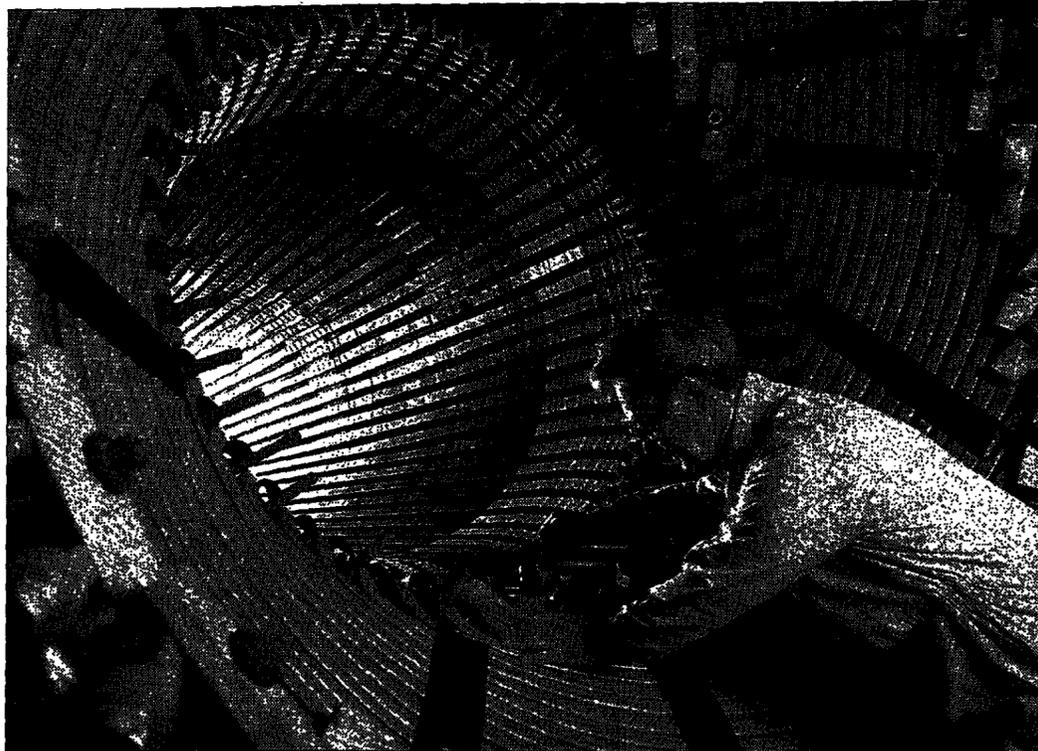
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SCOTTISH WIDOWS

After Swan Hunter, a 'body blow'



Powering down... Rolls is to concentrate on building smaller turbines after finding power station market hard to crack

# 2,500 Rolls jobs at risk

Simon Beavis and Martyn Halsall

UP TO 2,500 manufacturing jobs on Tyneside and in Derby were in jeopardy after Rolls-Royce last night announced plans to withdraw from making heavy steam turbines for power stations. The move will cost the company £238 million.

The move takes Rolls-Royce out of a part of the market it has found increasingly difficult to crack in the face of tough competition from companies such as ABB, Siemens and Mitsubishi.

The decision is said to follow a two-month strategic review of the company's operations, spearheaded by new chief executive John Rose.

Chairman Sir Ralph Robins said the market for large steam turbines had changed radically in the last few years, adding: "It is increasingly unlikely that Rolls-Royce can develop a leading global position in this sector of the market."

Civic leaders and local MPs expressed alarm at the announcement. Nick Brown, MP for Newcastle East, where Rolls jobs are under threat, denounced "a brutal announcement which has come as a complete surprise."

Mr Rose said that the workforce was determined to keep the business afloat. He said that the workforce was determined to keep the business afloat.

## Bass poised to become biggest brewer again

Lisa Buckingham and Paul Murphy

BREWING and leisure group Bass is next week expected to unveil its long-awaited acquisition of Allied Domecq's 50 per cent stake in Carlsberg-Tetley.

The deal will require the agreement of the Office of Fair Trading as it will give Bass the biggest share of the British beer market. This will allow the group to regain the position it enjoyed for so long before being ousted by Scottish & Newcastle's acquisition of Courage.

Carlsberg-Tetley is said to have a market share of about 16 per cent, ahead of Whitbread but a poor third to the two majors. That has been decisive as a result of the group's advertising support for top brands such as Tetley bitter and with the trend towards premium lagers.

Discussions between Bass and Allied since late 1995 but gained momentum when Whitbread ruled itself out of the race as a potential bidder.

It is understood that the OFT will insist that Bass sells a number of pubs, but market sources suggest this could be as few as 200. The disposal conditions imposed on S&N when its share of the market rose to 30 per cent with the acquisition of Courage were seen by industry executives as undemanding.

There has also been a suggestion that Guinness might buy some of the enlarged group's lager brands to boost its own position and reduce competition concerns.

## MPs accuse Stock Exchange of dragging feet on reforms

THE all-party Commons Treasury Select Committee accused the London Stock Exchange yesterday of failing to gear itself up to meet competition from European rivals.

The committee made its criticisms after an inquiry into the sacking of Michael Lawrence, the exchange's chief executive.

Mr Lawrence was ousted earlier this year after losing the confidence of fellow directors over reform plans.

The MPs' report concluded: "Despite threats from continental exchanges, the London Stock Exchange still appears to have great difficulty in tak-

## British Bus man and banker bailed on corruption charges

Dan Atkinson

FORMER bus company chairman and an ex-banker were yesterday arrested and charged with corruption offences totalling £800,000.

Mr Williams, chairman of British Bus, one of the largest firms in the industry, presented himself at 8am at Bishopsgate police station in the City.

Mr Harvey, who also appeared at Bishopsgate, was charged with accepting corruptly the loans between the same dates.

He is alleged to have offered interest-free loans totalling £300,000 to Ian Harvey, formerly "relationship" manager for British Bus at First National Bank of Boston.

The loans are supposed to have been made between January 1992 and June 14 1996 as "an inducement or reward" for showing favour to British Bus and other companies.

Mr Williams, who owned about a fourth of the equity, between £10 million and £15 million.

## Lloyds Chemists ruling upheld

Roger Cowe

LOYDS Chemists faces three more months of uncertainty after the Trade and Industry Secretary, Ian Lang, yesterday backed the Monopolies Commission's decision to block rival takeover bids unless the bidders could sell Lloyds' wholesale operations.

Mr Lang said that buyers for the businesses would have to be found by October 18.

Lloyds faces bids from German group GEHE and from Unichem in the UK. The £650 million offers lapsed when they were referred to the Monopolies Commission in March, but will be revived if the MMC's sale conditions can be met.

But most UK firms have decided to put only long-term incentive plans to shareholders, leaving them unable to express a view on much of the meat of boardroom pay.

## Shareholders to vote on bosses' pay

Siebe brings glasnost to annual meeting, reports LISA BUCKINGHAM

THE engineering group Siebe will become the first British firm to put the entire remuneration packages of its executives to a vote of shareholders at its annual meeting at the end of this month.

The company is also understood to be planning to let investors scrutinise and vote on directors' earnings every year in future.

The move follows a recommendation from the Greenbury Committee that companies should weigh up each year whether shareholders should vote on the details and policy of executive remuneration.

But most UK firms have decided to put only long-term incentive plans to shareholders, leaving them unable to express a view on much of the meat of boardroom pay.

regard the full introduction of Greenbury's recommendations as inevitable, and has decided to comply ahead of the pack.

A spokesman said: "It is in the nature of our own business and the Siebe culture to be ahead technically as well as in other matters. This is just one example."

The company declined to comment on its major shareholders' request that institutions vote in favour of the company to register their

approval of Siebe's actions. The engineering group seems to feel its remuneration packages will meet with approval.

Mr Kämmerer added that he was still convinced that a merger would make sense.

Unichem responded more optimistically. The company said Lloyds still presented "an attractive opportunity" and that finding buyers for the wholesaling arm would not be too difficult.

The chief executive, Jeff Harris, said: "When we originally looked at Lloyds in January, we factored in the expectation that we would have to divest wholesaling. The three-month deadline is shorter

than we expected, but that should present no problem."

He dismissed worries about the target's profit warning.

"Our business chain has shown good sales. The core activities are as valuable as ever."

### Saturday Notebook

## Standards slip in Charlotte Square



Edited by Alex Brummer

NEXT week, barring market accidents, Standard Life will collect a cheque for the not-inconsiderable sum of £380 million for the sale of the larger part of an investment stake in its Charlotte Square neighbour, the Bank of Scotland.

Indeed, the series of events that will culminate in the sale of the 29 per cent stake in the Bank of Scotland is leading to questions in the broader insurance industry as to whether recent happenings signal an end to Standard Life's mutual ownership.

The Bank of Scotland sale has been preceded by a series of resignations and leaks. First to walk the plank in April was Dick Barfield, Standard Life's chief investment manager, aged 49, the person responsible for managing the ungainly BoS stake.

Later, there was a leak to the Sunday press suggesting that the full Standard Life stake of 32.5 per cent was being put up for sale and might go to a trade buyer. This is not normally how institutions of the size and conservatism of Standard Life or BoS announce their intentions, not least because of market sensitivities.

Never mind, within 24 hours there was an official announcement that the sale was being studied. And within the week the Governor of the BoS, Sir Bruce Patullo, was writing to shareholders telling them of his resignation as a director of Standard Life.

largely over concerns that the BoS stake might be sold to a trade buyer. The Patullo resignation, the second in a turbulent six-week period, appeared to do the trick, as the possible trade sale became a less-sexy public offering.

All of these events, taken together, suggest that some deep divisions over the future have developed inside Standard Life. In its last report and accounts the chairman, Norman Lessels, made one of those strong defences of mutualism which are common among building societies preceding a conversion announcement.

Industry sources suggest that deep divisions on mutualism now exist at Standard Life and that they played a part in the BoS sell-off. The £800 million cash, which Standard says will be used for "investment purposes", is a neat endowment for a mutual which, in a world dominated by quoted financial giants such as Halifax/Leeds/Clerical Medical and Lloyds TSB, could be heading for a change of status.

### Rolls steams out

THE decision by Rolls-Royce to remove itself from steam power generation is an important change of direction. This al-

## Innovations for Burton as it buys into home shopping

Roger Cowe

BURTON Group yesterday bought the Innovations catalogue company, marking its return to expansion after turning round the Top Shop, Principles and Dorothy Perkins chains.

Burton beat off rival bidders, believed to include mail-order company Great Universal Stores. It is offering 2.153 shares for each Innovations share, making millionaires of the catalogue company's executive directors. The offer is worth £45 million but Innovations has £18 million in cash.

Burton also announced its first international franchise agreement, which will take Debenhams to Bahrain, and reported buoyant UK sales.

Finance director Andrew Higginson said the emphasis over the next two years was to

ways was the less glamorous end of the Rolls-Royce business and was intended as a more stable counterweight to the aero-engine business for which Rolls-Royce is so much better known.

But Parsons has been struggling. Despite winning some useful power plant contracts in India and forging a strategic relationship with Westinghouse, the Parsons business bought with the NEI in 1989 has found it difficult to compete in the global marketplace.

Whereas GEC's partnership with Alstom gave a new life to UK-based power generation, as privatisation was changing the rules in the domestic market, the Rolls-Royce unit has found it difficult to compete with the bigger players such as ABB, GE of the United States and GEC-Alstom.

There must be some prospect that one of these rivals will be glad to pick up the extra capacity offered by the Rolls-Royce withdrawal. But it is more likely — given the current state of order books for steam power generation, the relatively tight margins and the tough worldwide sales battle — that another significant slice of Britain's heavy engineering capacity will wither away.

It is interesting to note, however, that Rolls will be hanging on to that bit of the business which uses jet-engine technology to enhance the efficiency of existing and new power generation units.

The decision will be watched particularly closely in the investment community, because it is the first of any importance made by the new chief executive, John Rose. He has clearly taken the unorthodox view that tying up so much capital in business that is struggling to improve its cost structure against competitors makes no reasonable sense.

These costs are quite considerable: the company will have to take charges of £248 million in its accounts to cover the cost of closure, the unwinding of contracts and winding down of goodwill.

The costs and job losses could be limited if a trade sale emerges. But it is not entirely clear from where a long-term buyer would emerge, although Asia-Pacific has been mentioned. That would be fascinating — it is the same region that has kept Rolls-Royce alive as a major player in the equally demanding aero-engine sphere.

### Burton homes in

WHEN one looks at the difficulties that mail order veterans such as Great Universal Stores are having with their mail order business, one might wonder why on earth Burton should be moving into a similar arena.

The new Burton management, having banished the ghost of Sir Ralph Halpern, has decided that home shopping, the sophisticated successor to mail order, is a good business to be in. Directory shopping — either through a Next-style catalogue or on-line — is, like franchising, a promising area to develop. Its vehicle for expansion, Innovations Group, will bring a smile to all those tempted by its generally superior solar-powered or digital devices.

Innovations has, nevertheless, shown skill in reaching a market for home shopping. If the expensively acquired group can do the same for Burton fashion brands — Top Shop to Dorothy Perkins — it will be a neat trick.

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Austria 15.71	Germany 2.2250	Malta 0.5880	South Africa 8.8
Belgium 45.99	Greece 396.00	Netherlands 2.5100	Spain 168.50
Canada 2.0570	Hong Kong 11.64	New Zealand 2.1725	Sweden 10.0650
Cyprus 0.8250	India 55.32	Norway 6.65	Switzerland 1.8175
Denmark 8.95	Ireland 0.9375	Portugal 230.50	Switzerland 122.507
Finland 6.94	Israel 4.32	Saudi Arabia 5.7575	USA 1.5075

Supplied by Reuters Bank (including inter-bank and Israeli sheqel).

Vertical text on the right edge of the page, including "Sticker" and "French a" and "Murdoch".

1500 مائة الف

### Juppé offers islanders £900m of tax breaks while Brussels has a different cash cure for the holiday haven's plague of violence. Mark Milner and Julie Wolf report



Bearing gifts... Alain Juppé, left, receives a gesture of welcome from Marc Angeli, mayor of Ajaccio, at the start of the French prime minister's two-day visit to the island. PHOTOGRAPH: MICHEL SPINLER

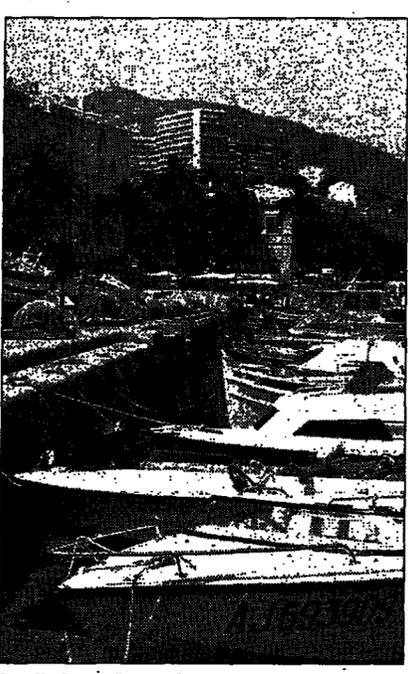
## Stick and carrot for Corsica

VISITORS are welcome in Corsica. Much of the island's economy depends on tourism. Few visitors this year, however, have been more welcome than French prime minister Alain Juppé, who spent two days there this week.

At the same time as seeking to boost the island's economic prospects, Mr Juppé has insisted there should be stick as well as carrot in the government approach. Corsican police and judicial authorities have been told to adopt a "get tough" approach, "whatever the nature of the crime and whoever is suspected".

Mr Juppé's plan for a *zone franche* has received a warm welcome from much of the island's business community. The Ajaccio chamber of commerce has been lobbying for some time for action, according to the chamber's Sandrine Ceccaldi. The Juppé package "is not totally what we asked for but it is a big success".

At the same time, Monika Wulf-Mathies, the EU's regional affairs commissioner, has called for the formation of a "European action plan" for Corsica. This would involve targeting money on Corsica from various parts of the EU's structural funds, which go to the less prosperous parts of the union.



Paradise lost... Factional violence has kept tourists away from Ajaccio's seafront. PHOTOGRAPH: RAY ROBERTS

### Mr Juppé has insisted that police and judicial authorities adopt a tougher approach, 'whatever the nature of the crime and whoever is suspected'

The main aim, according to Mrs Ceccaldi, "is to preserve the companies which are existing in Corsica". Mrs Ceccaldi acknowledges the impact of the violence on the tourist trade. "What is happening this year is what happened last year, there are fewer and fewer tourists. That

is a shame, the violence is very limited." Not everyone has been so complimentary. Some trade unionists have attacked Mr Juppé's package as a "present to the bosses".

Moreover, the commission is drawing up its own plan to put EU aid totalling more than £246 million to better effect in Corsica. A commission source said officials "haven't got any major problems" with the French scheme on competition grounds. But, he added, that formal approval by EU competition commissioner Karel Van Miert was not likely until September, given that the EU's competition division has asked the French government for more details on several aspects of the plan.

## French aerospace charts future for satellite city

FUNDAMENTAL changes are on the way for France's aerospace industry and for Toulouse, the city which is its home. Visitors flying into the city's international airport cannot mistake the industry's importance to the region. All along the main runway stand the hangars, assembly shops and offices of the state-owned aerospace group Aerospatiale and the Airbus Industrie consortium.

Over the next three years it intends to shed its consortium structure and become a conventional company, able to retain profits and take quicker decisions. It wants to end the system under which manufacturing is shared between consortium partners

and wants to be able to place orders for components with lower-cost manufacturers. Both announcements will increase competitive pressures on the two organisations, with knock-on effects for the work force. But if the moves are successful there is scope in the medium term for further employment in the region.

Unemployment, at 12 per cent, is near the national average and local officials say that it would be even lower but for the increasing number of skilled people without jobs who are moving to the region to find work. Aerospatiale executives believe that the decision to set up Airbus as a single company

will lead to more jobs. A senior official said that new staff would have to be taken on to replace Aerospatiale employees, including designers, who are to become part of the new stand-alone Airbus company.

The presence of the aerospace industry has ensured that Toulouse has a modern infrastructure. This, coupled with the research centres, has attracted other high-technology companies. The US electronics group Motorola, for example, came to Toulouse in 1967 and now employs 2,500 people in its three plants there. It set up its own R&D centre two years ago — its first outside the US. It

## Murdoch shut out of Italian pay TV

AFTER an abortive attempt last year to buy the media activities of Silvio Berlusconi's Fininvest group, Rupert Murdoch's hopes of extending his empire into the promising Italian market through a stake in the satellite broadcaster Telepiù may be dashed.

Germany's Kirch group, a major shareholder in Telepiù, is said to be planning to sell 12.5 per cent of its stake in the company — currently at 57 per cent — as it reorganises its shareholdings after the recent alliance with Mr Murdoch. There had been speculation that Mr Murdoch could be interested in the holding.

Meanwhile, Romano Prodi's centre-left coalition this week obeyed the long-standing tradition which requires incoming Italian governments to set about reforming regulations governing the television and telecommunications sectors. Also respecting tradition, the government has found itself embroiled in a fierce row with Mediaset, which claims the new regulations

could cost it more than a trillion lire a year. By bringing TV into the remit of the new authority, the government has drawn the sting of a constitutional court ruling that could have stripped Mediaset of one of its networks. However, the new law also sets an unbreakable limit of 30 per cent for the slice of the TV revenue cake any player can command.

## SNCF chairman quits after court rejects release plea

Financial staff  
OIK Le Floch-Prigent yesterday resigned as chairman of the French railway system, SNCF. SNCF officials declined to comment on the announcement by the transport ministry, less than 24 hours after a court rejected Mr Le Floch-Prigent's appeal against detention.

Mr Le Floch-Prigent has been detained at La Santé, a Paris prison, since July 5 in connection with an investigation into Elf Aquitaine's alleged funding of the textile company, Bidermann International, when Mr Le Floch-Prigent chaired the oil company between 1988 and 1993.

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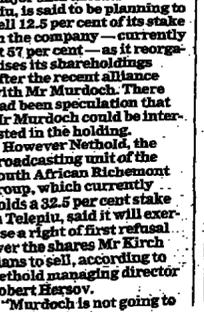
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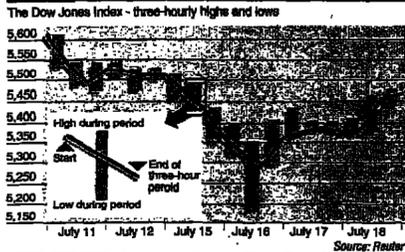
Murdoch is not going to be joining Telepiù. Mr Hervo told a news conference in Milan. Mr Hervo indicated yesterday he was confident the deal would be closed this month.



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Finance Guardian

The Ups and Downs



Doom-mongers claimed to know it would happen all along, while other market movers tried to steady nerves after Wall Street's terrifying share price roller-coaster ride last week.

After the deluge... New York Stock Exchange. Photograph: ADAM NADEL

ROBERT R. FRECHTER JR has much in common with the doomsday sandwich-board men whose placards read "The End is Nigh".

points, then plunged nearly 170 points, then staged a spectacular recovery in 15 minutes to close slightly higher on the day, almost 700 million shares changed hands — a record for the New York Stock Exchange.

"It is imperative that you have your house in order before the new trend begins. For starters, have no long-term funds in stocks or bonds. Be wary of owning real estate for investment purposes..."

The most remarkable illustration of this go-go stock market spirit came with the performance of technology-related stocks — many of them smaller companies quoted on New York's junior stock exchange, NASDAQ.



Apocalypse, not just yet

borrowing costs quite yet, which allowed the Dow Jones to stage a sharp recovery on Thursday.

has come from people who do not have the money to lose — amateurs, if you like. In the US, retail investors have watched Wall Street's seemingly relentless rise over the past 18 months and have been falling over each other to invest in mutual funds or directly into stocks.

In the hope that gains in the price will cover interest. A similar, if less rampant, trend has been noticeable in Britain. Over recent months, stockbrokers in the Square Mile have reported a surge in what are known as "T plus 25" bargains — the process whereby investors buy shares but delay settlement for 25 days, rather than the usual five.

ing to pay for the shares — and it is a sure wager that many would not have the money if forced to do so.

Train ticket for a return journey

JOHN TRAIN is the sharp-talking chairman of Montrose Advisors, a New York investment boutique, and his thoughts on why stock markets go up and down are refreshingly straightforward.

- 1. The Washout: "Stocks are going way down." Business news is terrible and commentators declare things will get worse. Investors dump stocks, without regard to value.
2. The Early Surge: "Things look better, but it's too early to buy." When everybody is waiting for a buying opportunity, there is unlikely to be any buying opportunity.
3. The Surge Continues: "Prices seem high. It's a bit late to buy." A few institutional investors get pulled into the market, pushing prices higher. Private investors move from feeling that it is too early to buy shares to feeling it may be too late. Prices seem expensive, since everyone is comparing current share prices with those of the recent past.
4. The Second Stage of the Reckless: "Maybe it's OK to buy." A year or so after the bottom, and with prices much higher, the public starts to become interested.
5. Not a Cloud in the Sky: "Buy!" The public is hooked. Business news is excellent, profit forecasts are optimistic and jazzy new investment funds proliferate. One particular sector becomes a market darling.
6. The Blowoff: "Stocks can only go up." Hot fund managers have become famous. Greedy investors, hoping for miracles, chase new market themes as a pack.
7. Cooling: "The market is high, but this time it's different." Shares prices begin to hesitate. But enthusiasts insist the Government has mastered the business cycle, or that equities are the only refuge of inflation, or just that it is a "new era".
8. The Top: "Hold." Interest rates start to go up to halt overheating. There is a series of vicious market reactions, or "chops", although the arrival of "second chance" buyers helps the decline and pushes prices up to new highs. Those who sold feel foolish, while the buyers are jubilant.
9. Over the Hump: "It's too soon to sell." The public remains heavily in the market, while the professionals begin to edge towards the door.
10. The Slide: "Prices are cheap, but it's too late to sell." The public remains reluctant to sell, because on the way down in a bear market stocks seem cheap. Share prices sink on bad news but fail to respond to bullish news.
11. "It's OK to sell." A big event, such as a bankruptcy, punctures the balloon. There is often a powerful but deceptive recovery, a "trap rally".
12. The Cascades: "Sell!" Business news is bad and the forecasts are for more storms. The hot fund managers have to sell stock to meet investors' redemptions, but find they can't get out of illiquid stocks.
13 (Or back to 1 again): The Selling Climax: "The market's going way down."
Mr Train believes that if you have the guts to act, this is the moment when you can make the buy of a lifetime. "We've had eight economic storms since the second world war. Each time investors became convinced that the skies would never clear, or the sun shine again. But it always does."
\*FT Pitman Publishing, 1995

There is a simple explanation for this: the London stock market has failed to match the astonishing performance of Wall Street over past months, and so the fallout should be limited. But how limited, exactly, is open to fierce debate.

more to do to bring costs under control and improve margins. Wages, meanwhile, are not rising here.

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Save the dolphin first
Roger Cowe
SMALL shareholders rank alongside whales and dolphins as an endangered species to be preserved at all costs. It is surprising that Greenpeace has not sent one of its ships up the Thames to harass the Stock Exchange in their support.

Quick Crossword No. 8183
Across: 1 Pertaining to home (8), 5 Aid (in crime) (4), 9 Female carnivore (5), 10 Dilemma (7), 11 Curry soup (12), 13 A mercy (anag) (6), 14 Exaggerate (5), 17 White hot (12), 20 Unruly (7), 21 Blase (5), 22 Certain (4), 23 One pretending to be another (8)
Down: 1 Plunge (4), 2 Blend (of petrol and air?) (7), 3 Bant on one purpose (5-6), 4 Attack verbally (6)
6 Under (5), 7 Absolute nonsense (5-3), 8 Old bridge in Florence (5,7), 12 Hero of tendon and heel (6), 15 Curl of hair (7), 16 Things thrown overboard (6), 18 Shrink in... (5), 19... apprehension (4)

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